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ABSTRACT

This document is designed to help literacy practitioners and others establish civic literacy programs to help learners in South Carolina develop general literacy skills applied to the everyday tasks of being a citizen and active community member. The rationale for promoting civic literacy and the challenges for adult civic literacy system development are outlined, along with an ecological view of civic literacy development. Eight types of civic literacy initiatives, including the following, are described: involving youth in civic literacy learning; asset-based approaches to community development that promote civic literacy development; civic literacy development with special populations; civic literacy development promoted while examining neighborhood and community quality of life; and civic literacy development and enhancing just environments. Next, various aspects of starting a civic literacy initiative are discussed, including the following: a design for civic literacy initiatives; the work of the overall planning committee; typical community development perspectives and practices; typical adult education and communication practices; and 10 areas to consider in sustaining effective civic literacy initiatives. Ways of measuring success are suggested. Annotated listings of 21 quality of life and benchmark reports and processes and 135 available civic literacy resources are presented. An explanation of the National Adult Literacy Survey levels of literacy is appended. Forty-eight endnotes and references are included. (MN)

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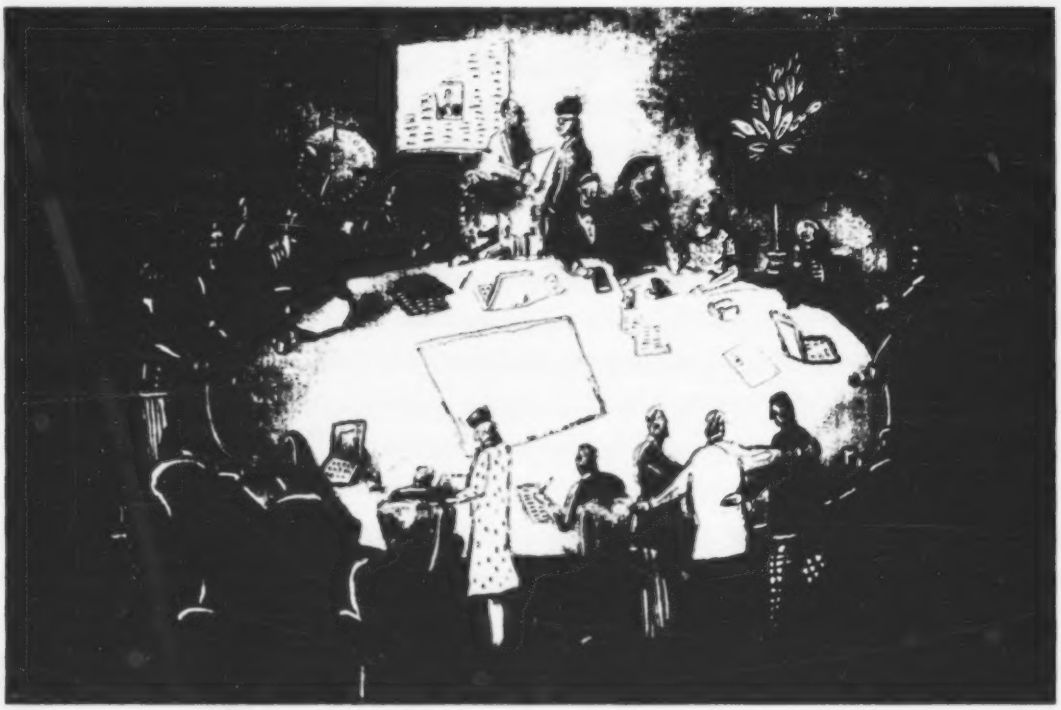

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Promoting Civic Literacy

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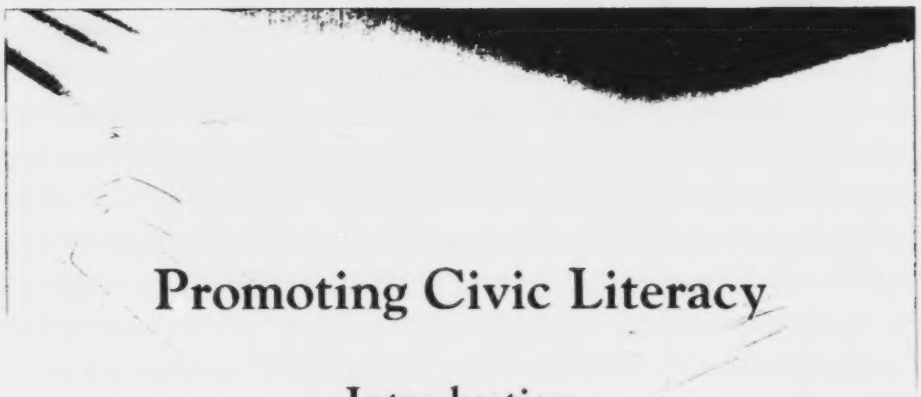

Promoting Civic Literacy

Introduction

When the National Institute for Literacy asked over two thousand adults what they needed to be literate, compete in the global economy and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship, the answers were not altogether expected. What was expected of them at work had changed dramatically, calling for new skills and lifelong enrichment. They said the challenges in raising their kids had increased and were so different from previous times. Health decision-making had become enormously complex. Polls indicated Americans felt vaguely and uncomfortably disconnected. Adults were joining civic organizations less and less. They wished America could be more civil, more trustworthy, and a more collectively caring community. There was a growing awareness that no person was an island and that he or she needed effective support from others in order to survive and thrive. When they weren't involved in neighboring they felt isolated and often their neighborhood life got worse. From these discussions, four fundamental needs were identified that made them want to improve themselves and learn more. These needs are now

> *"Americans of all ages, all stations in life, and all types of dispositions are forever forming associations. There are not only commercial and industrial associations in which all take part, but others of a thousand different types—religious, moral, serious, futile, very general and very limited, immensely large and very minute....Nothing, in my view, deserves more attention than the intellectual and moral associations in America."*
>
> *Alexis de Tocqueville, 1831,*
> *Democracy in America, page 513*

> *"...most Americans no longer spend much time in community organizations—we've stopped doing committee work, stopped serving as officers, and stopped going to meetings. All this despite rapid increases in education that have given more of us than ever before the skills, the resources, and the interest that once foster civic engagement. In short, Americans have been dropping out in droves, not merely from political life, but from organized community life more generally."*
>
> *As observed in 1999 by Robert Putnam,*
> *Bowling Alone in America, page 64*

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referred to as the four purposes for literacy learning: access, voice, effective action and learning to bridge to the future.

Adults responding to the survey indicated that the primary purposes for their learning was to *access* information and resources so they could orient themselves to a fast changing world. They learned in order to *give voice* to their ideas and opinions with the confidence that they will be heard and taken into account. They learned so that they could improve their ability to *solve problems and make decisions* on their own, acting independently, as parents, citizens, and workers, for the good of their families, their communities and their nation. They were motivated to learn in order to *bridge to the future in their thoughts and actions* so that they could keep up with a fast changing world. These four primary purposes for learning were used by the National Institute for Literacy to frame literacy development standards.

Table 1. Basic Literacy Skills Needed By All People

Communication Skills
Read with understanding
Convey ideas in writing
Speak so others can understand
Listen actively
Observe critically

Decision Making Skills
Solve problems and make decisions
Plan
Use math to solve problems and communicate

Interpersonal Skills
Cooperate with others
Guide Others
Advocate and Influence
Resolve conflict and negotiate

Lifelong Learning Skills
Take responsibility for learning
Learn through research
Reflect and evaluate
Use information and communications technology

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The skills adults need as parents/family members, workers, and citizens go beyond the basic academic skills that have traditionally been targeted by adult education programs. Equipped for the Future (EFF) is the National Institute for Literacy's standards-based system reform initiative aimed at improving the literacy system's capacity to equip adults with the skills needed to fulfill these roles.

Literacy is the ability to read, write, and speak English proficiently, to compute and solve problems, and to use technology in order to become a lifelong learner and to be effective in the family, in the workplace and in the community.[1] It involves gaining proficiency in 4 primary skill areas. Table 1 identifies these four areas. As is evident, being a literate individual involves more than being able to read and write.

Civic literacy involves the development of general literacy skills applied to the everyday tasks of being a citizen and active community member. Within the national adult literacy movement the primary reason for developing civic literacy competence is so that "citizens and community members are able to take informed action and to make a positive difference in their lives, communities and world." At the heart of civic literacy development is citizens becoming involved in community affairs, and creating and sustaining just, healthy environments. By uplifting the skills of large numbers of citizens and encouraging civic participation, community quality of life improves.

Because adults tend to learn things that are important to them and learn when they need to, the EFF initiative organized literacy education around the basic roles adults play. Four roles are primary to most adults: parent/family member, worker, health consumer/provider, and citizen/community member. EFF, in their report on content standards for literacy education, recommends that the 4 literacy skill areas noted in Table 1 should be taught within the context of the key roles adults assume and the pervasive literacy-related tasks they perform in these roles. Table 2 describes the role as citizens/community members and tasks associated with this role. The EFF web site provides information on the standards and skills associated with this role, as well as that of worker and parent/family member. (See http://www.nifl.gov/lincs/collections/eff/eff.html.)[2]

The National Institute for Literacy is charged by the U.S. Congress to develop standards for leaders to use to equip adults with needed literacy skills. For each role, key everyday literacy-related tasks were identified. These tasks endure

Table 2. Equipped For the Future – Citizen/Community Member Role Map

The Equipped for the Future role maps describe what adults do when they are effective in their roles as parents/family members, workers, and citizens/community members. EFF partners developed the role maps by asking adults from many different walks of life to describe what they needed to be able to do to fulfill these roles. Each role map includes the following parts: the key purpose or central aim of the role, broad areas of responsibility that are the critical functions adults perform, and key activities through which the role is performed. We can use the role maps to identify what is important for us to teach and learn.

Key Purpose

Effective citizens and community members take informed action to make a positive difference in their lives, communities, and world.

Broad Areas of Responsibility

Become and Stay Informed: Citizens and community members find and use information to identify and solve problems and contribute to the community	**Form and Express Opinions and Ideas:** Citizens and community members develop a personal voice and use it individually and as a group	**Work Together:** Citizens and community members interact with other people to get things done toward a common purpose	**Take Action to Strengthen Communities:** Citizens and community members exercise their rights and responsibilities as individuals and as members of groups to im-prove the world around them
KEY ACTIVITIES			
Identify, monitor, and anticipate problems, community needs, strengths, and resources for yourself and others	Strengthen and express a sense of self that reflects personal history, values, beliefs, and roles in the larger community	Get involved in the community and get others involved	Help yourself and others
Recognize and understand human, legal, and civic rights and responsibilities for yourself and others	Learn from others' experiences and ideas	Respect others and work to eliminate discrimination and prejudice	Educate others
Figure out how the system that affects an issue works	Communicate so that others understand	Define common values, visions, and goals	Influence decision makers and hold them accountable
Identify how to have an impact and recognize that individuals can make a difference	Reflect on and reevaluate your own opinions and ideas	Manage and resolve conflict	Provide leadership within the community
Find, interpret, analyze, and use diverse sources of information, including personal experience			

Equipped for the Future Content Standards[3]

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through time and across the various roles. They are the building blocks of being a literate adult. The 13 everyday tasks related to the use of civic literacy skills are found in Table 3. They are primary competencies used to be a responsible citizen and relate effectively to neighbors and other community members. Educators are encouraged to use them as the basis for developing learning opportunities for adults engaged in community affairs. You will see that these tasks are a further amplification of the role maps described above.

Table 3. 13 Everyday Literacy-related Tasks Done By All Citizens and Community Members

1. **Gather, analyze and use information**
   (Find and analyze information from diverse sources. Use it to form opinions, make decisions, and take action.)
   - Monitor and gather information form a variety of sources
   - Establish criteria for the quality and appropriateness of the information
   - Assess the value of the information
   - Use the information to make informed decisions

2. **Manage resources**
   (Find, manage, share, and allocate time, money, and material resources in a way that supports your own neighboring and citizen needs, goals, and priorities and those of your family, neighbors, fellow workers.)
   - Identify those resources you have and those you need
   - Determine where resources are and how they can be obtained
   - Use the resources in an efficient and effective manner
   - Balance resources effectively for family, work, community and self

3. **Work within the big picture of community, state and nation**
   (Look beyond the immediate situation. Take into account the structures, culture, practices, and formal and informal rules and expectations of the goods and services systems that influence and shape your neighboring and community relations actions.)
   - Gather information about a system and how it works
   - Determine your relationship to the system and the roles you and others play within it
   - Monitor the system and predict changes
   - Base your efforts to influence the system on your knowledge of how it works

4. **Work together**
   (Cooperate with others to learn, accomplish tasks, and pursue common neighborhood and community development goals.)
   - Identify what needs to be done and plan how to do it
   - Pay attention to the relationships within the group as well as to completing the task
   - Identify and draw upon everyone's strengths in carrying out the work of the group
   - Recognize and deal with conflict in a productive manner

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5. **Provide leadership**
   (Inspire and direct others in shaping and achieving common neighborhood and community improvement goals.)
   - Institute and manage plans for action and change based on an understanding of the big picture
   - Organize and motivate others to act
   - Guide sound problem solving and decision making
   - Assure consistent monitoring and evaluation of performance

6. **Guide and support others**
   (Help others succeed by setting an example of civic engagement, providing opportunities for learning, or giving other kinds of assistance.)
   - Acknowledge and reward others' strengths and accomplishments
   - Contribute to creating supportive learning environments and experiences
   - Empower others through mentoring, coaching, helping and being a role model

7. **Seek guidance and support from others**
   (Help yourself succeed by asking for information, advice, and assistance.)
   - Recognize when you need help and know where to go for it
   - Seek out relationships with people whose judgment is trusted
   - Create and make use of networks of personal and professional contacts
   - Be responsive to new ideas and accept and use constructive criticism and feedback

8. **Develop and express sense of self**
   (Create you own personal voice in neighborhood and community living. Use you understanding of self to guide your neighborhood and community interactions.)
   - Examine and clarify your own values and beliefs, recognizing the role your cultural heritage and personal history play in shaping these and in determining the possibilities of expression
   - Maintain standards of integrity
   - Consider the constraints of the situation as well as your own strengths and weaknesses when choosing a course of action
   - Pursue outlets for interests and talents to build and maintain a sense of belonging to community

9. **Respect others and value diversity**
   (Respect and appreciate the values, beliefs, cultures, and history of others. Use this understanding to counteract prejudice and stereotypes.)
   - Create an environment where others feel welcome, are included, and thrive
   - Encourage and carefully consider a wide range of opinion and beliefs
   - Educate yourself about other cultures
   - Challenge the beliefs that a person's inherent capacity is limited by background or group membership.

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10. **Exercise rights and responsibilities**
(Act and advocate on behalf of yourself and others, taking into account laws, social standards, and cultural traditions.)
- Recognize and assume your share of family, civic, and work responsibilities
- Monitor and keep up-to-date on federal, state, and local laws and regulations
- Make sure your own behavior is just and responsible
- Take personal responsibility to bring about change or resolve problems to achieve a common good

11. **Create and pursue vision and goals**
(Dare to dream what your neighborhood and community could be. Be clear about where you want to go to sustain, enhance a sense of community and how to get there.)
- Articulate a vision that embodies your values and goals or those of your family, community or work group
- Establish attainable goals that are compatible with that vision
- Develop a realistic plan to move toward the vision and goals
- Create alternative means of meeting your goals that anticipate the effects of change

12. **Use technology and other tools to accomplish goals**
(Be familiar with a variety of tools and technologies that can make it easier to achieve your neighboring and community interaction goals.)
- Keep up-to-date on developments in tools and technologies that may be useful for communicating, managing information, solving problems, and carrying out daily tasks
- Determine which tools are most useful for the purpose and context at hand
- Use complex tools, machines, and equipment to solve problems

13. **Keep pace with change**
(Anticipate, manage and adapt to change in neighborhood and community conditions and support systems that affect your life.)
- Adjust your goals and plans over time to take into account actual or prospective changes in the neighborhood and community
- Keep abreast of and evaluate trends in goods and services industries that support neighborhood and community well-being, as well as the nation and world
- Determine what skills and knowledge are needed to meet emerging neighbor and community interaction needs or new situations
- Create opportunities to expand your own skills and knowledge, as well as those of your family, neighborhood, community, and work group.

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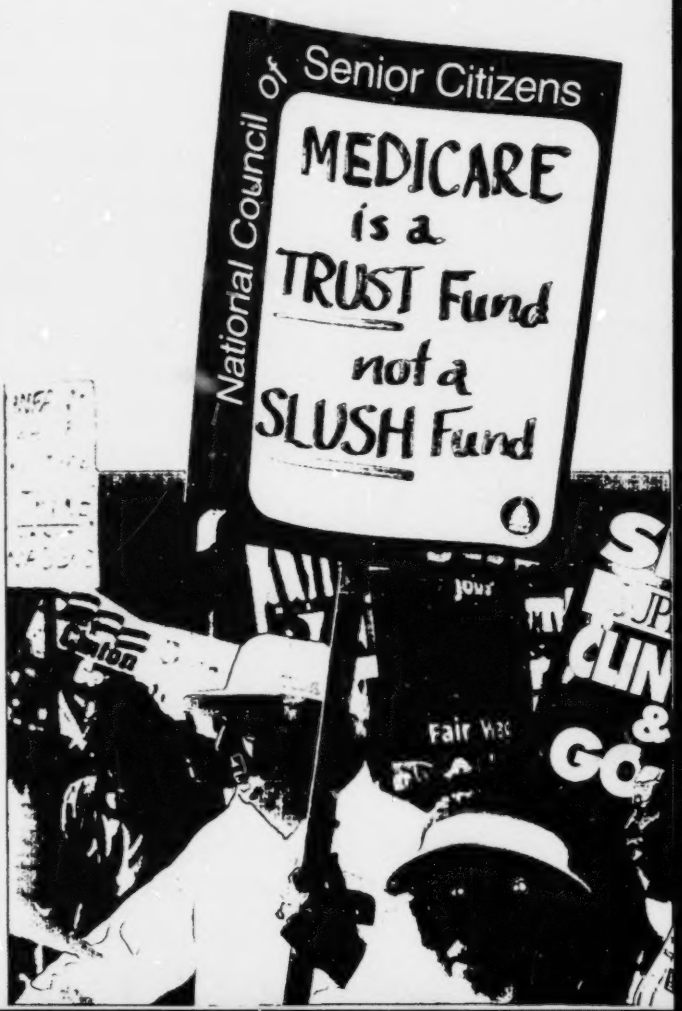
According to the National Adult Literacy Survey, 20% of the U.S. adult population, scored at the lowest of five levels of literacy. In South Carolina, 25% of the population fell in the lowest literacy category. Some counties in South Carolina have even higher rates.[4] This means that many adults are missing the opportunity to be good neighbors and community members. It means there is less volunteering of all kinds than what could be the case. It means that fewer people are involved in making community improvement decisions. It means that trust and respect for community leaders is less than it could be. It means that civic engagement is less than what it could be. It means that prejudice and discrimination are apt to be more prevalent.

Even those adults who score in the next lowest level (i.e. level 2) of literacy are ill equipped with some of the basic skills and information necessary to function successfully as employees, parents, neighbors and friends. This means that over 56% of the population in South Carolina do not have the basic skills they need for family life, employment, citizenship or community life. The Appendix provides a description of literacy levels and what is tested.[5] Civic literacy competence is tested as one facet of overall literacy competence.

However, low civic literacy is not just a problem of the poor, the under-educated, the low functioning literate. One can be literate in certain areas and not functionally literate in others. If adequate training and experiences have not been available, a person can miss being educated in an important area of adult life. For example, one can be a Ph.D. and be functionally illiterate in terms of civic literacy. One can function well as a family member and parent, and not function well as a health consumer or community member. To be functionally literate with civic literacy skills one has to be able to apply the literacy skills identified in Table 1 to the civic literacy tasks identified in Table 3. One has to use these skills and do these everyday tasks in fairly complex ways (i.e. at level 3 or higher when using the National Adult Literacy Survey or the CASAS assessments as a base.)

We must and can do better to meet the needs of our citizens who are not adequately prepared for their roles as parents/family member, workers, health provider/consumer, and citizen/community member. However, we face significant challenges in creating an effective system for raising adult civic literacy levels. These challenges, described in the next section, direct our attention to problem areas that need to be addressed.[6]



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Challenges for Adult Civic Literacy System Development

The condition of civic engagement in the U.S. has eroded sharply over the past 30 years. There is a number of troubling trends in our civic life. During the past 30 years, in particular during the past decade, the level of trust in government, large institutions, and in fellow citizens has fallen sharply. Basic civility has eroded, along with many kinds of civic participation. Recent studies show citizens are joining fewer membership associations, church attendance has been declining, and voter turn out is lessening. Associations of all kinds are loosing membership in record numbers. The content of our popular culture deeply troubles many. The influence of religion and spiritual values in our society is lower than it once was and what many think it ought to be.[7] The publication of Robert Putnam's *Bowling Alone in America* helped focus fears that America's distinctive source of social strength—its network of voluntary associations—is weakening.

> *"No society can remain vital or even survive without a reasonable base of shared values—and such values are not established by edict from lofty levels of the society. They are generated chiefly in the family, school, church, and other intimate settings in which people deal with one another face to face. The ideas of justice and compassion are nurtured in communities."*
>
> *John Gardner in Building Community, 5.*

Yet others have shown that perhaps the way we volunteer and become involved in community is changing. The way we associate is changing.[8] While some of the more traditional forms of association have declined, other forms of community association and networking have greatly increased. Volunteering as a family has now stimulated more people, particularly men and those affiliated with faith-based groups, to volunteer in record numbers. (See summary Table 4 for a few enlightening trends in volunteering.) The way we engage seems to be changing. The challenge for civic literacy educators is to find a context for education that is meaningful to modern day adults who have been influenced by all the conditions that have changed the way they want to engage in community life and the conditions under which they will engage. Civic literacy skills are learned within the context of civic engagement.

As a result of higher standards in K-12 education and the phasing out of remedial courses at institutions of higher education, the number of youth seeking - and being pointed toward - adult education services will increase. This is likely to put more pressure on an already strained system. In the case of civic literacy, national studies show that children and youth are not being prepared well enough by schools to function effectively as citizens and active community members.

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Therefore, for at least the next three decades at minimum, the burden for civic literacy development rests on adult and non-formal education efforts. We have to play catch up to educate young adults who have not had adequate instruction in the formative years as well as educate most adults in SC to become effective community members.[9] In some South Carolina counties, the drop out rate from high school is alarmingly high. When youth drop out of what little civic studies they have available to them in high school, the adult civic literacy situation is worsened.

The changing demographic makeup of the United States is increasing the number of people who need adult education and literacy services. Access to services is a critical issue, in terms of both the growing need and the varying concerns of different populations. There are only a few efforts underway in South Carolina for adults to learn civic literacy. There are not enough English for Speakers Of Other Languages (ESOL) classes. There are not enough bilingual health services. One of the recognized effective civic literacy efforts (i.e. Healthy Communities) has just been terminated due to state budget cuts.[10] The population profile has changed dramatically in SC, as well as the U.S., in the past decade. There is a growing need for civic literacy to new immigrant populations as well as adults who grew up in America.

Adults need more opportunities to gain the skills and knowledge needed to meet changing job demands and to succeed in the workforce. The connections between workplace literacy and civic literacy are many. For example, a recent national survey indicates that U.S. schools do not teach students to think about how economic structures and processes affect daily life and civic engagement. The impacts of a changing economy are not connected well enough in people's minds to the consequences of the quality of life locally.[11] Adult and non-formal education environments could help adults, children and youth learn these things. Citizens, as wage earners, could know what just work environments are and how to sustain or enhance them in ways that are good for business as well as the worker. In addition a recent survey indicates that a primary way in which adults become community volunteers is through finding out about and joining civic engagement efforts that they are introduced to through work associates. Growing an economy requires increased workplace and civic literacy skills for all adults.

Learning disabilities (LD) are increasingly recognized as a major factor in the low literacy of adults, but too little is known - even among practitioners - about the nature and scope of the problem, the ways it affects adult learning, and how it should be addressed. Dealing with LD in all forms of literacy instruction is

still not well defined or handled in most places. Moreover, too few adults with LD are being identified and receiving appropriate instruction and accommodations. Dealing with LD in civic literacy initiatives is virtually uncharted territory. Yet, if we want to increase the numbers who vote, if we want to increase the number who show up for public hearings, or if we want to increase the numbers that participate in community improvements, then we have to develop better ways to engage those with learning disabilities.

New technology is profoundly changing the way we live, work, associate and learn. This technology both requires and facilitates lifelong learning. But the adult education and literacy field has not yet taken full advantage of the potential technology has for transforming adult learning. Adults, as well as youth, are voting less, not attending public meetings, and reducing involvement in membership organizations.[12] But they appear to be becoming involved in record numbers in more hands-on civic engagement efforts aimed at helping neighbors, improving neighborhoods or sections of communities. [13] These hands-on civic engagement efforts often use the media, phones, internet communications, statistical analysis, video productions, study circles with CD self-learning systems, web-based conferences, etc. Those adults with low literacy rates may need assistance in learning to use these devices during civic engagement. Civic literacy educators (e.g. pastors, nonprofit leaders, public officials, health educators, active lay leaders, fraternity and sorority leaders, teachers, legislators, government service providers, etc.) must learn to use these devices as well and begin using them in what they do.

Public support for improving education for our nation's youth is increasing, but we lack that same support for improving adult education and literacy programs. There is a need for a better understanding of the importance of adult education and literacy to the nation's (and South Carolina's) well being. Civic literacy education is weak across the board. Some school curricula and climates may need to model civic engagement and use civic literacy skills. Some community government leaders may need to learn to model democracy and teach adults how to engage in democratic processes while conducting the business of government. Nonprofit leaders may need to be taught to involve consumers in the decision making on the nature of services provided. Public and private sectors alike may need to increase their recognition of the importance of lifelong learning (and thus adult education broadly defined). This is the business of all branches of government at all levels, as well as the nonprofit and private sectors. The expenditure for adult education in SC may need the same attention by state and county officials as does early childhood education, given the percentage of adults estimated as functionally illiterate in SC. Otherwise all the dollars and attention spent on children may not be reinforced by most of the adults in the child's primary settings. Furthermore given recent survey results, faith-based organizations have a major influence on the willingness of adults to engage in civic life. (See Table 4.) Adult education needs to have the same priority as children's ministries in these contexts.

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Providing high quality, consistent literacy education services to adult learners is limited by a variety of critical programmatic factors. Among the most pressing are: a lack of consensus on goals, serious limitations of staff time and professional development opportunities, lack of research and information on what works, mismatches between program structure and learners' needs, and the lack of active attention to adult learners as whole people. There are not enough civic literate adults who know enough about such basics as how to best engage residents in discussions about their community, or how to help residents find a voice in a public forum. Too few community leaders are equipped to help neighborhood groups solve their own issues or know how to help ethnocentric groups learn to understand and accommodate social diversity in rapidly changing population environments. Both the content and process of civic literacy education is not yet commonly understood or applied. Most adult educators are unprepared in this area of literacy education. Currently no higher education institution in SC has a major concentration of professional preparation available on adult literacy development.[14]

In summary, South Carolina and the nation face major challenges in building a system of literacy education that meets the need in the United States. Civic literacy education systems are even less organized than are workplace, family, and health literacy education efforts. Efforts that do exist to help adults become engaged in civic affairs often neglect the civic literacy education components that would make their efforts more successful. For example, one might want to hold

Table 4. Highlights of the Independent Sector's Giving and Volunteering in the United States 1999 Survey[15]

Basic Facts about Volunteering in America

- A growing % of volunteers is volunteering in some type of activity with members of their family.
- The larger the family household (4 or more) the higher the amount of family volunteering
- 28% of Americans who volunteer do so with family members (22% in 1991; 22% in 1993; 23% in 1995)
- 27.5% of all Americans volunteer without family members participation
- 44.5% of Americans do not volunteer
- When there are 3 or more persons in a household, family volunteering is the highest % of volunteering done
- 51% of volunteers serve with family members in the same activity (this trend has been steadily increasing since 1991)
- 72% of those that volunteer with family members indicate they started volunteering activities as a child
- Men volunteer more in family volunteer situations

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Where Do Families Volunteer?

- 22% health activities
- 30.4% human services
- 34.8% education
- 40.9% youth development
- 50.2% religious activities
- 50.4% informal helping efforts apart from organizations

Top 5 Reasons Why Families Volunteer?

- 90.6% feeling of compassion for others in need
- 80% having an interest in the activity
- 80% using the volunteer activity as an opportunity to gain a new perspective on things
- 72% activity is important to people the volunteer respects
- 70% a relative or family member would benefit from the activity or was directly involved in the activity

Who Asked Them to Volunteer?

- 53% someone from an known organization, group or from a place of employment
- 82% someone from a religious organization they attend or that a family member attends
- 45% someone the volunteer knows (52% by friends; 38% by someone from religious congregation; 30% by family members or relative)

How Do Family Volunteers Compare To Other Types of Volunteers?

	Family Volunteers	Non-Family Volunteers	All Volunteers
Volunteering			
Average hours volunteered	4.3 hours	2.8 hours	3.5 hours
Average household income	$54,804	$46,927	$50,862
Giving			
Average household contribution	$1,401	$898	$1,144
Average % of household income given	2.6%	1.9%	2.2%
Selected Demographics			
Male	48.3%	41.2%	44.6%
Female	51.7%	58.8%	55.4%
Married	71.7%	47%	59.6%
Own home	75.6%	68.3%	71.8%
Households with children under 18	52.6%	35.7%	44%
Attend religious services	88.5%	78.3%	83.5%

Source: Independent Sector, Giving and Volunteering in the United States, 1999

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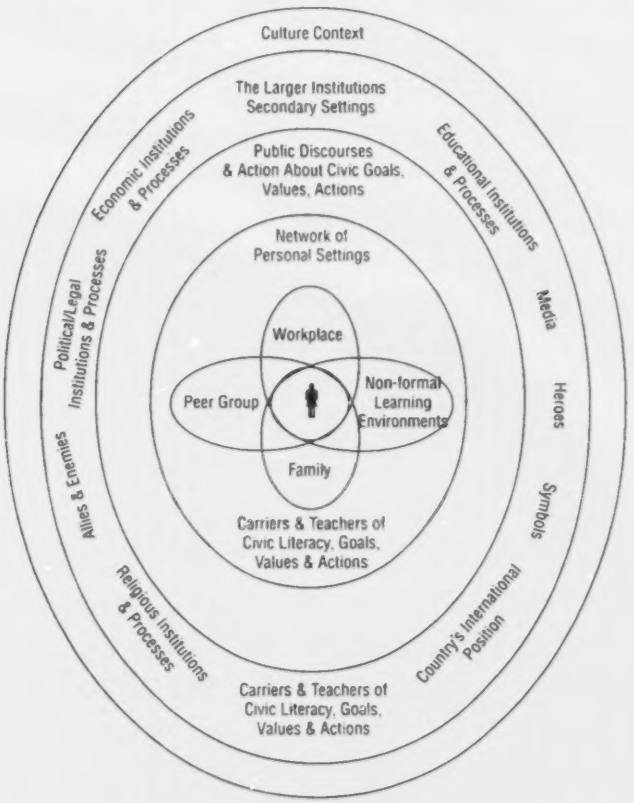
study circles within neighborhoods but ignore the opportunity to train people to more adequately use the skills found in Table 3. And as Table 4 indicates, the natural contexts for civic literacy education are those where ordinary adults are volunteering in record numbers. For this reason, combining civic literacy with family and health literacy education appears to have great promise, given the current volunteer trends.

An Ecological View of Civic Literacy Development

A useful way to think about adult civic literacy development in adults is from the context of human growth and development. How do we learn civic literacy skills? From whom do we learn the most effectively? An ecological perspective is fruitful in understanding who influences civic literacy values development and who the "teachers" are of civic literacy education. Briefly, all human growth and development, including civic literacy development within youth and adults, is a function of the interaction between people and the human systems in which they are involved, and of the interaction of these systems with one another.[16] It may be visualized as in Figure 1. A brief explanation of the figure follows.

Figure 1. An Ecological View of Civic Literacy Development in Adults



The most influential human interactions effecting a person's growth and development are those within each adult's network of personal settings. The most immediate teachers of civic literacy skills are those adults one has contact with on a daily basis. They are family members, peers, and people they associate with in non-formal learning environments such as religious study groups, clubs, study groups, and sports. Associations also occur within the more formal organizations with which they have contact on a routine basis. These associations include contact with church members, pastors, school peers and teachers, workplace associates and supervisors. It is the public discourse about civic literacy goals, values and skills in these settings that are most influential in civic literacy growth and development of each individual.

Neighborhoods (i.e. neighbors and the neighborhood environment) are often found to be mediating structures that can help people cope with the larger institutions and organizations' messages and actions. For example, the staff members of larger institutions, such as government, may not be civic engagement-minded in style. However, if neighbors engage neighbors in conversations and actions about neighborhood and community well-being, then a person may develop higher civic literacy skills and, over time, feel a greater sense of efficacy in being able to affect civic change.

People representing the larger institutions that affect our daily life are important but often impact people differently than those in an adult's primary settings. Sometimes people in primary settings can buffer the impact of what is done to or with them in secondary settings. A person might not have direct or daily contact with representatives from these institutions but what they do affects quality of life. So therefore the "teaching" of civic values and goals and processes is more indirect. The conduct of business leaders and their affect on our economic well being is a case in point. The misuse of retirement funds by company leaders is a recent painful example of how people we don't know or associate with can impact our well being. Public official deciding to close a road without public input on impacts is another example. These people's civic literacy messages, value and goals are often either reinforced by trusted people in their primary settings or refuted by them. Each individual must decide what to do to reconcile differences in the messages between these two settings (primary and secondary). Often he or she will trust the messages, actions and value system of the people found in his or her primary settings.

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Secondary setting "teachers" of civic literacy values, goals and skills include people from the media, business and economic

development, legal and political institutional representatives such as lawyers, politicians, and public servants. It also includes people from social groups we belong to and that often are organized by gender, ethnicity, race, religion, or language differences. These groups may be membership associations that are statewide, regional or national in nature. We may not directly know the leaders but their actions can affect us because of their influence over the directions of the organizations to which we belong. For example, there are numerous and vastly different religious messages that communicate what it means to live in a just society, to act morally and ethically, to treat people with respect and dignity, and to engage in building healthy communities.

There are also allies and enemies from within and outside our country. They send instructive messages that help shape civic literacy thinking, conversation and action. What happened September 11, 2001 was a profound civic literacy lesson for many.

There are also heroes, symbols, and narratives in national and local communities that teach civic literacy goals and values. For example, a flag has once again become a symbol of freedom, democracy and justice (and to others hate, retaliation, injustice, slavery, domination). The same symbols often have powerfully different meanings to different groups. Symbols are powerful visual reminders of community values. Educators can create symbols that enhance civic literacy values and actions.

Values and goals expressed by other community leaders help us either value or devalue social participation. Secondary setting teachers of civic literacy often subtly teach how to view the public good and reconcile that with self interest. Those in our primary and secondary settings model whether it is valued as better to go it alone, or find support and help from others when needed. Through the give and take of interaction within the human settings near and distance, an adult's perceptions about how much they can really make a difference in civic life is either enhanced or inhibited.

Thinking of the development of civic literacy skills within the primary and secondary settings of adults' life can help leaders develop meaningful civic literacy learning contexts and strategies.

Various kinds of civic literacy initiatives are reviewed in the next section of this report. Other reports in this series discuss how to begin family, health, workplace and workforce literacy initiatives.

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What Are Civic Literacy Initiatives Like?

The concept behind civic literacy initiatives is that strengthening adult literacy and civic engagement competencies provides a pathway to improve adults' functioning in their role as citizen and engaged community member, and to ensure that democracy flourishes. However, as a recent national survey suggests, we still lack consensus on the aims and context for civic literacy education.[17] While this is particularly true for primary, secondary and higher education contexts, community learning contexts have developed more consensus and patterns. Therefore this section highlights these patterns.

> *Citizens need to be educated for democracy.*
>
> *Thomas Jefferson*

This section highlights some of the common features found in such efforts. It refers to many different organizations. All organizations referenced in this section are described in the Resource section of this report along with their web address so that interested readers can easily access resources, models, curricula, publications, networks, visuals, surveys, measurement tools, and more.

Sometimes adults appear not to want to get involved in civic life at all. Some have found that the best thing to do under these circumstances is to involve their children and youth in civic engagement efforts and invite the adults to come along. We start by reviewing these types of initiatives. Next reviewed is one the most widely used and successful models of civic literacy education. This is known as the Healthy Communities movement. A relatively new approach to civic engagement that departs from the more usual approach to community conversation is then reviewed. Typically civic literacy education is organized around discussion of community issues or problems. In the 1980's community discussion was reoriented around assets and strengths (while not ignoring problems). We review some of these efforts. These efforts also helped people understand what the primary building blocks of good growth and development of individuals, families and communities were. It helped leaders better understand the connections between civic literacy development and community and family well being.

More and more community leaders are helping increase civic literacy skills by involving neighbors and community members in conversations about their community. This type of effort is reviewed. Following this review civic literacy development with special populations is examined.

When business leaders and public officials become engaged in civic literacy education it is often around increasing everyone's understanding of a community's quality of life. Business leaders locate businesses where community quality of life is high. Looking at community quality of life can be a great context for civic literacy education. Therefore some of these types of efforts are reviewed.

Finally, keeping democracy alive involves constantly thinking and rethinking what it means to treat people with dignity and to act so that environments are just and healthy. Thomas Jefferson said democracy has to be taught. Civic literacy education is needed to teach people how to examine and create just, healthy environments. A few of these types of initiatives are reviewed.

All initiatives need standards and frameworks to guide thought and action. Civic literacy initiatives need standards and frameworks too. Standards and frameworks answer "What is civic literacy education all about?" (Tables 2 and 3 summarize the standards proposed by the National Literacy Summit participants and promoted by the National Institute for Literacy.) Civic literacy conceptual frameworks, such as Figure 1 of this report, also can help address "how do we go about this education process and who should be involved?" There are a few reports that will help the reader follow established standards and frameworks for civic literacy education. These are reviewed briefly before reviewing various types of civic literacy initiatives.

The famous 1980s *Nation at Risk* report focused attention on enhancing civic literacy (among other things) within our educational system. It highlighted our lack of attention to building necessary civic literacy skills in children and youth. In the 1990s Presidents Bush and Clinton required the development of high quality national standards for core curriculum that should be taught in schools throughout the U.S.[18] One of the areas for which standards were developed is civic education. The EFF report clarified these standards as related to adult civic literacy education. Another major report highlighting standards is The National Commission on Civic Renewal's 1998 report which sets the stage for what needs to be done during the first decade of the 21st Century to enhance civic literacy skills in the American population.[19] So there are some key sources of standards that all leaders serious about civic literacy education need to consult in shaping their initiatives.

In addition, a report by The International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievements is expected out in late 2002. This report is expected to impact what teachers within schools are asked to do to increase civic literacy education. It will also be valuable to adult educators interested in what standards will be promoted internationally as basic civic literacy values, goals, and skills. But, as pointed out earlier in this report, for the next three decades the burden of educating all Americans, young and old, will rest on what we do in the adult education (broadly defined) arena. The bonds of community life to a large degree have unraveled. The fabric of community life must be rewoven through concerted adult civic literacy education nationwide.

Various kinds of civic literacy education initiatives are reviewed below. We start by linking the reader to resources and efforts within schools that will be useful in adult education contexts.

Preparing Tomorrow's Adults with Increased Civic Literacy Skills

As mentioned previously, most of the educational resources are applied to better equipping children and youth with civic literacy competencies. The lion's share of the resources available is being applied to equipping schools (as one of many possible and important primary setting learning environments). Therefore many of the resources available can be found through organizations that primarily focus on school curriculum development and teacher training. These resources will need to be revised for use with adults but are good resources on which to draw. One of the major centers that have developed model programs is the Center on Civic Education.[20]

Using the resources development by the Center on Civic Education, some schools have familiarized youth with political processes and how to influence legislation so that voice and perspective are gained. Mock Trials, Kids Voting, Lobby Day, Close Up and other such programs focus on introducing youth to the legislative and judicial processes. Reportedly as of 1999, over 26 million students at all levels nationwide have gone through the Center on Civic Education's "We the People...The Citizen and the Constitution" program. This program engages students in, among other things, mock legislative hearings on constitutional issues. Project Citizen, another Center program, teaches middle school students how to identify, articulate, and solve community problems.

The Center's resources and programs will be particularly valuable to community leaders who aim to involve immigrant populations and very low literate adults in civic learning experiences. They also have application to other primary settings such as church study groups, club conversations, and fraternity and sorority meetings.

Service learning initiatives are now widely spread throughout the state and nation.[21] These involve youth with adults in community projects of different sorts. Only some of them truly focus on trying to enhance literacy skills while also engaging the use of civic literacy skills. But popular projects include, reading to younger children, being a tutor, assisting seniors with health care decision making, starting homework centers particularly in low-resourced areas, and assisting low literate adults to be able to vote and participate in neighborhood improvement meetings.

Only one source for school-oriented resources is given in this report. If the reader uses the Center on Civic Education's web site they will find their way to most of what is available to this audience. They will also discover many other exemplar initiatives to draw from.

Involving Youth in Civic Literacy Learning as A Way to Get To Adults

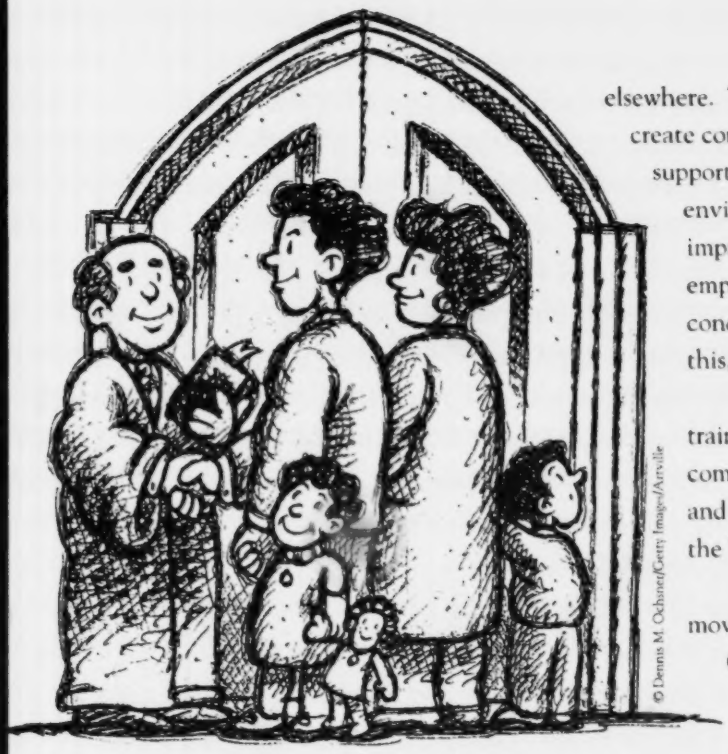
Internationally, community developers have found involving children and youth in conversations about civic life many times is the best and fastest way to activate adults. These efforts tend not to be done through school sponsorship but through nonprofit- and public agency-sponsored initiatives. The World Health Organization, many of the international aid agencies, and most international nonprofit relief organizations have engaged youth and children in exercises known in urban and regional planning circles as "community build outs".[22] In such exercises children and youth are asked to literally construct their neighborhoods or communities. Once constructed, young people discuss various topics that might include what they feel about places that they consider safe, what they like and don't like about their community and how they would change their community, if they could. The goals and values of community participation, justice, and valuing human life and well being are often discussed naturally during these conversations. Civic literacy discussion is put within the context of everyday life and what really matters to people to survive and thrive. Rather than just talking about a vision for improvement, they literally change physically the construction of the community to show people what things would look like when improved. They talk about how people would interact differently. Their model of a preferred community is then used as a vehicle for public conversation in which children and youth share with adults (i.e. community leaders, parents, and interested adults) what they have done.

Very often these conversations inspire adults to understand their community through the eyes of their children. It motivates them to make necessary improvements. It often motivates adult groups to go through similar exercises. Children, youth and adults express civic values, goals, beliefs, and preferred community actions throughout the process.

Many civic engagement and literacy education efforts were reviewed in a recent publication available through the American Planning Association Press.[23] Many of the models reviewed have useful information available on the web. In addition, the arts commissions throughout the U.S. have created a capacity to help community leaders facilitate community visioning exercises. The South Carolina Arts Commission is well recognized for their excellent facilitation of community visioning exercises.[24]

Civic Literacy Development Using Healthy Communities' Principles, Processes and Resources

It is possible to combine health literacy and civic literacy development in communities. The best initiative to learn from which combines these two aspects of literacy is the Healthy Communities movement. In addition many recognize this movement as the most widely spread civic literacy education effort in the U.S. and



elsewhere. This is a worldwide movement. Its purpose is to create conditions in cities and towns (rural and urban) that support health and improve equity in access to healthy environments. The ultimate aim is to empower people to improve their individual and collective health and to empower communities to alter the physical and social conditions that directly affect their health. In order to do this, civic literacy skills are taught and used.

This worldwide effort is unique. Through training, networking and discourse among healthy communities, community groups, individuals, families, and their resources are mobilized in new ways to promote the health of the entire population.

In the United States, the Healthy Communities movement began under the leadership of the National Civic League.[25] In 1988, it was elected by U.S. Public Health Services to develop and implement the U.S. Healthy Communities Initiative. The National Civic League advocates a new civic agenda to create communities that work for everyone. It strengthens citizen democracy by strengthening democratic institutions. Founded in 1894, the organization also promotes collaborative problem solving and consensus-based decision-making in local community building. It accomplishes this mission through technical assistance, training, publishing, research and an awards program. It is the central source to go to get connected with the resources. Their newly formed Alliance for National Renewal should be consulted. The Alliance's publications include handbooks on starting a healthy community project in your community.

The Coalition for Healthier Cities and Communities grew out of the work of the National Civic League.[26] It is a partnership of more than 100 organizations working together to focus attention and resources to improve the health and quality of life in communities. Many of its resources are aimed at increasing civic literacy understandings and skills. It is a major source of success stories to inspire local efforts as well as very practical community guides for leaders. Model healthy community programs will not be reviewed in this report because they are so readily available online through the Coalition's and National Civic League's web sites.

All 50 states have Healthy Communities initiatives going on. They are based in a variety of organizational environments (public and private). They have a variety of emphases and orientations, based on local conditions and contexts. But even with this variety there are some common processes used by them all that help create and sustain healthy community initiatives and promote civic literacy development.

The common processes involved in increasing civic literacy while engaging in healthy communities efforts are reviewed in the Lets Get Started section of this report.

Several S.C. communities have done exemplar healthy community projects. Perhaps among those most referenced are Seneca's Healthy Youth, Healthy Community initiative, Hampton County's Healthy Community forums and subsequent projects, Beaufort's Healthy Community Partners work in Sheldon, Aiken's Healthy Community efforts, and Anderson Partners for a Healthy Community Neighborhood Chats and Healthwise projects. Aiken and Anderson won All-American City awards. Their story can be found on the National Civic League's web site.

From 1994-2001, the home base for the SC Healthy Communities initiative was the SC Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC). With recent budget cutbacks, this program was terminated. The South Carolina leadership in DHEC and its former partnership circles are regrouping. Most leaders familiar with its work believe that somehow it needs to be kept going. Many attribute the Healthy Communities program with building necessary social capital in many communities across South Carolina. During the 1990s, S.C.'s Healthy Communities initiative was considered by national leaders to be one of the best in the nation.

Over the years, many communities have been through South Carolina's Healthy Community training programs. It was the primary vehicle in South Carolina for teaching civic literacy skills to adults. Healthy Community leadership did such things as increase community involvement in addressing local health problems and provide consultation and technical assistance related to Healthy Community concepts, principles, and strategies. They fostered the development of community partnerships. They maintained and circulated resource materials. They produced a quarterly newsletter. They sponsored Healthy Communities training/ mentoring programs. They sponsored an Investing in Healthy Communities initiative that provided small grants for community groups to get going on Healthy Community efforts.

If you are starting such an initiative there are still many active South Carolina healthy community groups to call on. A listing of SC Healthy Communities groups can be found on the Clemson University, Institute on Family and Neighborhood Life, SC Center on Grassroots and Nonprofit Leadership web site.[27]

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Asset-based Approaches to Community Development That Promote Civic Literacy Development

While not all asset-based community building efforts intentionally focus of the development of civic literacy education, but some do. Two major movements top the list when people talk about asset-based community development efforts: the work of the Search Institute and The Asset-based Center for Community Development (ABCD).

The Search Institute's research and development work on essential asset building blocks that promote individual, family and community well being is very thorough and credible. At the heart of its work is the development of a framework of 40 developmental assets, which are positive experiences, relationships, opportunities, and personal qualities that all people throughout their life span need to grow up healthy, caring, and responsible.[28] Civic literacy skills are thus embedded in a larger human and community growth and development framework. It is compatible to the ecological developmental framework explained in Figure 1.

The Search Institute has created a very useful survey process that helps communities assess how they rate on having the 40 essential assets available and as viewed by children, youth and adults. They have many useful resources to consult. Nationally, examples are available of community groups that have used a combination of the Search Institute's, the Study Circle Resource Center's (reviewed below), and the National Civic Leagues Healthy Communities' orientations. (See the Alliance for National Renewal, The National Civic League, and the Coalition for Healthier Cities and Communities sites for descriptions.)

The Asset-based Community Development (ABCD) Center has promoted a complimentary conceptual and practical framework (to the Search Institute's and to that described in Figure 1) and is now used by thousands of community groups across the U.S. Perhaps they are best known for their "asset mapping" techniques. Associations that neighbors affiliate with are inventoried. The strengths and talents of neighbors are inventoried. These techniques are used in a variety of different ways during civic engagement processes. Civic literacy development is combined with other community building processes aimed at better using local resources and strengths to meet needs. Video training materials and useful citizen guides are available. Members of the ABCD, John McKnight and Jody Kretzmann, have made several presentations to various community groups in SC during the 1990s (e.g. Healthy Communities Training groups, First Steps Conferences, Neighborhood Association Summit). Greenwood is currently one of 13 national sites (Neighborhood Circles) involved in using ABCD orientations and processes with neighborhood associations.[29] Neighborhood associations are one primary setting that could be an effective civic literacy education context.

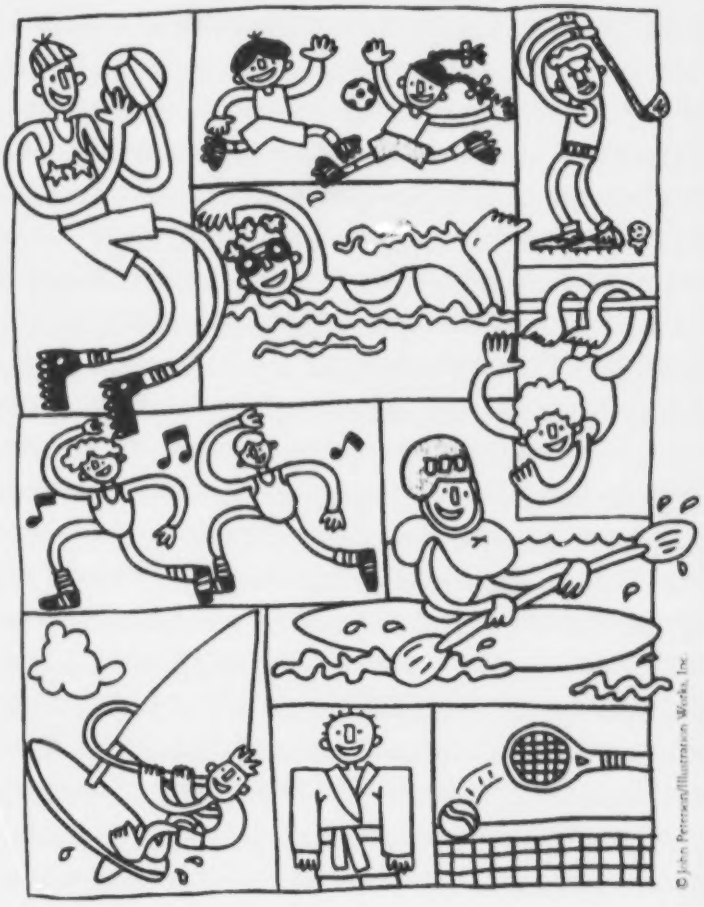
To summarize, not all ABCD or Search Institute initiatives are civic literacy initiatives but the ideas, tools, and processes promoted by these two groups can be

used in a civic literacy initiative. If the facilitators are overtly focusing on the development of literacy skills in general and civic literacy skills in particular, they then become powerful resources to consult. They provide ideas for how to structure the community building process.

Another major thing to learn from both these initiatives is that civic literacy does not have to dwell on problems, issues, or concerns of people. Civic literacy can be done within a strengths and asset framework, and stress enhancing the goodness that already exists. Issues are not ignored but just are not used as the organizing center for civic engagement and conversation.

Civic Literacy Development through Enriching Community Conversations about Matters Affecting Everyday Life

From international development experience we understand that an individual's ability to think, talk and act are positively affected if adults are given opportunities to talk with one another. Guided discussions that help adults talk about their present situation and how it might improve are necessary to improve civic literacy thinking and change behaviors that might not be working for them in healthy ways. Adults need opportunities to talk about their neighborhood and community. Individual and social cognition and behavior are positively affected when they are given such opportunities. With time citizens improve the way they talk about situations and improve their ability to address these situations in ever increasingly complex ways. A variety of different public forum processes have developed to promote civic literacy. Behind the use of these forums in an understanding of the human growth and development principles outlined in this paragraph. Three are reviewed.



The Kettering Foundation created the National Issues Forum to promote civic literacy development. The National Issues Forum (NIF) has now become an entity independent from Kettering.[30] Through the NIF, critical issues affecting many communities in America have been identified, issue guides written, public policy institutes held to equip local facilitators to hold issue forums, and forums held. The issue reports used as a basis for forum discussion are found on the NIF web site.

The Kettering Foundation has furthered its work through its People and Public Choice program. They also have developed useful study guides, workbooks, and training programs.[31] They are advancing the notion of deliberative democracy and seeking practical answers to the question of what increases the chances that choices people make about public issues are wise choices?

One of the strengths of both Kettering Foundation and the NIF work is that it helps citizens understand that any given issue has multiple perspectives. It helps citizens develop skills in how to hear, understand, and deal with the diverse perspectives that do exist and how to find common ground around which to unite. Facilitation of such conversations is not easy. Facilitators of Issues Forums must go through extensive training.

In South Carolina, the National Issues Forums are currently managed through Clemson University's Cooperative Extension (CES) program.[32] The Institute on Family and Neighborhood Life and CES, both at Clemson University, plan to hold Issue Forums on adult literacy in selected counties in 2002.[33]

Another major resource and model is the community group study circle system developed by the Study Circles Resource Center. Because the word "study" implies schooling to many and because schooling is negative to many literacy level 1 and 2 adults, some community groups use different words to describe their initiative (e.g. Anderson chose "Neighborhood Chats"). The idea is to structure conversations about civic life as it affects their everyday life. The community action processes are much the same as described elsewhere in this report. (For example, see the Lets Get Started section describing the Healthy Communities processes that community groups typically follow.) The Study Circles Resource Center has many resources that will help facilitators structure the conversation process. They also have many stories of community groups to use to design your efforts and to help you describe to others what promoting study circles in their neighborhood, church, community is all about.

A word of caution is in order. Many adult literacy issues are overlooked when engaging in Issue Forums, Study Circles, or Issue conversations in general. Using such techniques only become civic literacy education efforts when there is carefully designed and facilitated education for facilitators and community participants so that they can go through such discussions using and practicing increased literacy skills as described in Tables 1, 2 and 3. The average adult is not use to talking about what they value. They aren't use to thinking about their community. They may not know how to frame a positive outcome statement. These are all civic literacy skills that have to be developed. Often facilitators are caught by surprise when the substance of the conversations seems less rich and on target than they thought it would be. The quality of issue forums, study circles and issue conversations in general will increase if leaders overtly approach the process as civic literacy skill development. More models will be presented for adults to see and

follow. More time will be spent on helping them frame statements. More feedback will be given when things seem to be "off".

Civic Literacy Development with Special Populations

Probably the most understood need for adult civic literacy education is with immigrants. Civic literacy is often combined with English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes. ESOL classes are often taught through adult education offerings through the department of education, or through neighborhood-based centers or religious organizations. The resources available through the Center for Civic Education, Teachers of English as a Second Language Association, and World Education are places to start for model efforts and curricula.

Civic literacy development with groups working on affordable housing or tenant association development is also quite popular. A primary resource for this type of civic literacy effort is ACORN (The Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now). It is the oldest and most well known resource. Consulting their web site will provide the gateway to model program descriptions and resources. The Building Better Communities Network is also another resource to consult for those starting this type of civic literacy initiative.

> *Literacy is the foundation of opportunity and the cornerstone of success for individuals, families, communities, and companies. Investing in literacy yields benefits for everyone and ultimately makes the world a better place."*
>
> *Chuck Lee, Chairman and Co-CEO, Verizon*[48]

Civic literacy for individuals who want to start their own businesses is also being done around the world. Women and teens are often the focus of such efforts. Known as "Women in Development" projects internationally, the same principles learned in other nations have been brought back home and applied in the United States.[34] In order for low-resourced individuals to start businesses, there has to be mechanisms in the economy that provide start up money and technical assistance to low-resourced individuals. Regular banks do not usually want the risk. Community banks, evolving loan funds, Individual Development Accounts are mechanisms that some communities develop to support civic literacy and business skill development needs.

One of the most well known community banks that truly pays attention to both the literacy and business skill development needs of people is the South Shore Bank. The South Shore Bank is based on the famous Grameen Bank located in Bangladesh. South Shore Bank is the oldest and largest of its kind in the U.S. Many states have patterned their community banks after these two models. Civic literacy development is combined with business skill development. Microenterprise development is predicated on the assumption that adults will need improved literacy

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skills in order to begin and maintain successful businesses. The National Foundation of Teaching Entrepreneurship is also a primary resource to consult for help on doing civic literacy and micro-business development with youth. All these organizations provide practical help to individuals, nonprofits (including faith-based groups), and businesses interested in contributing to workforce development in their area. They have civic literacy education components built in to their overall training schemes and their community development initiatives.

Civic Literacy Development Promoted While Examining Neighborhood and Community Quality of Life

Businesses come into communities that have a high quality of life. Community leaders across the country have developed report cards on key indicators of well being so that they can improve quality of life and thus attract businesses. But each community's report card will take on a different nature given the directions of conversations by community's leaders and members. As citizens learn to analyze what their community is like and how it needs to change, their conversations and fact finding is presented in quality of life reports. The report is usually the result of extensive community discussions and problem solving sessions. In order to produce such a report, all four general literacy skill areas are enhanced (i.e. decision-making skills, communication, interpersonal, and lifelong learning skills). When community members rather than professionals develop the report, they provide a context for the development of general and civic literacy skills.

These reports can become a social memory aid to galvanize action and a common set of civic beliefs and values. Civic engagement and literacy development are topics of conversation in some communities that produced reports. A few of these initiatives are reviewed under the resource section of this report. A more complete listing of community quality of life initiatives is available through the Clemson University, Institute on Family and Neighborhood Life, S.C. Center on Grassroots and Nonprofit Leadership's web site. (See http://www.sclc.clemson.edu)

Community members will be most engaged in enhancing quality of life in a community when they are a part of the conversations and planning. The report simply captures conversation and agreements among those engaged. When a significant number of community members are engaged, then constructing quality of life reports is a valuable context in which to teach general and civic literacy skills.

Civic Literacy Development and Enhancing Just Environments

The conditions of poverty cannot be overcome without conversations with and between the poor. Those in poverty are often silent and separated. They often suffer without the larger community being aware of it. Civic literacy development, on the other hand, aims to give people the skills to access information and resources; to gain voice in a way they will be heard and taken into account; and to increase people's ability to solve problems and take effective action.

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Civic literacy development can be about enhancing just environments. The processes used to teach civic literacy can be the same process involved in creating just environments. Consult the Let's Get Started section of this report for the processes a typical community group goes through when focused on creating just environments. Consult the resources available through the National Issue Forums for help in framing such discussions. Many NIF issue booklets address social justice issues including denial of access to resources needed to survive and thrive and the inequitable treatment of minorities. Other resources help groups learn to create their own powerful definitions of justice and a just environment. For example, see the Highlander Center's definitions found on their web site. The Study Circle Resource Center, the National Issue Forum, the American Civic Forum, The National Civic League and the Civic Practices Network provide powerful instructive models to follow to create and enhance just environments while at the same time providing a context to promote civic literacy development.

One initiative is highlighted because of its long-standing work to overcome poverty and various forms of injustice in Appalachia and the South. It is the Highlander Center, located in New Market Tennessee. The strategy for doing their work is based on a simple philosophy. "We believe that true social change goes beyond dealing with the symptoms of inequality and gets to root causes. Getting at the roots of injustice requires building grassroots movements for change led by those most affected by oppression." They are particularly known for their effective mobilization of ordinary citizens to action. Their web site, internships, and workshops are some of the best in the nation. Many of their community organizing publications are available online. Their links section on their web site will open the world of grassroots organizing for civic literacy purposes. Their center's organizing themes on democratic participation and economic justice are worth consideration. Developing a few organizing themes to your work is helpful. What they have done might be a model to follow.

Facilitators' mediation and conflict management skills need to be fairly high in order to properly handle social justice discussions. Otherwise ordinary citizens will stop coming because most do not like being a part of conflicting situations, particularly if they currently feel they have no voice or control over the situation being discussed. At least one of the leaders needs to be gifted in helping people deal

constructively with differing opinions, attitudes and beliefs, some of which are held passionately. Information gathering activities often reveal which people are denied access to resources, places, spaces and opportunities and how it impacts life and well being. People can get angry with each other when they find out what is happening. Many times those having resources or limiting access do not understand how they negatively impact others. Facilitation of such discussion can either be productive or lead to adult disengagement.

Civic literacy skills related to conflict management need to be modeled and developed within community members so that conflict is constructively handled and differing perspectives accommodated. Part of the process of literacy development is helping people think from multiple perspectives. To "appreciate diversity" one practically has to develop the ability to hear perspectives that are different from one's own. One has to articulate his or her own value system. One has to be able to deal with differences in perspectives in ways that are fruitful. One has to learn how to find the common ground and allow difference to exist without letting personal fears of all sorts stop expressions of difference. For this reason it is extremely valuable to have partners who are skilled in leading people through resolving conflicts and helping people think and act from multicultural perspectives. The Association for Conflict Resolution and the NIF public policy institutes are two good sources to learn such skills. The South Carolina Council for Conflict Resolution, and Mediation Works are local resources to draw on.

In the next section tips on getting started with a civic literacy initiative are discussed.

How Do We Start?

A Design for Civic Literacy Initiatives

Civic literacy encompasses a unique educational approach that is experientially based and integrates community engagement components. Literacy skill development in general (Table 1) is combined with civic literacy skill development (Table 2 and 3). Table 5 describes five civic literacy program components typically present.

These components provide the framework for civic literacy initiatives to function effectively. When the components are well integrated they provide the experiences adults need to be effective citizens and community members. Within this framework, a great deal of diversity is found from one effort to another as has been illustrated elsewhere in this report. Civic literacy programs vary from one community to another as each effort works to meet the needs and use the assets of community participants.

The nature and scale of civic literacy efforts are as varied as communities. But the components reviewed in Table 5 tend to be present.

Table 5. Five Components of Civic Literacy Programs

1. **Experiential adult education occurs.** Adults learn literacy skills as they carry out community improvement efforts or engage in discussions about community life. (See Tables 1, 2 and 3.) They learn to develop literacy skills by reflecting on their present situation and thinking in ever improved ways about a better future. The education is not schooling-oriented in approach but rather experiential. People learn about how to do something, then do it, then reflect on how well they did, and then do it again. The learning has immediate results. Either life is improved or it isn't. Just as much time is spent on preparation of the literacy educational component as on the community improvement process itself.

2. **Goals and values of democracy, social justice, human dignity, the importance and significance of civic engagement are articulated.** People are helped to articulate current values and beliefs. There is careful definition of these terms as defined by well-respected great teachers, heroes, leaders, and scholars. There is reflection on and discussion of what the concept means in everyday life. There is assistance in learning to shape goals, articulate values, and accommodate value and belief differences.

3. **A community development or community building process occurs.** There is a clearly articulated approach to civic engagement. (Some of these approaches have been reviewed elsewhere in this report.) It involves citizens in doing community improvement on their own rather than professionals doing it on their behalf. There is intentional effort to empower low literate adults to think and act in improved ways for the betterment of their neighborhoods and community (and thus society) through civic literacy education.

4. **Outcomes and impacts of efforts are evaluated.** There is a carefully designed process of reflection, in the true sense of how Dewey talked about it. Action without reflection does not produce civic literacy learning. Reflection without action does not produce civic engagement.

5. **Gains in civic literacy skills are evaluated.** Not only is the result of efforts examined (i.e. the community improvement made) but also what civic literacy competencies have increased. Civic literacy knowledge, skills and behaviors are examined before, during and after interventions occur.

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Civic literacy efforts can be sponsored by faith-based groups and focus on practicing civic literacy development while engaged in community social action or outreach efforts. They can be the basis of work for neighborhood associations throughout the year. A healthy community group can sponsor them. They can be done by Success by Six groups or First Steps councils. They can be done by nonprofits in partnership with community residents. They can be conducted by adult educators through the public school system, by literacy councils and associations or led by interfaith councils.

Successful efforts tend to involve adult learners in the design of civic literacy learning processes that make sense to them and meet their needs. Instruction is modified appropriately to respond to the variety of cultures involved. Successful efforts adapt practice and program design to the special needs of participants. Effective civic literacy programs make use of community services and other resources in implementing each of the five components, serving as a catalyst in adapting these services to better meet the needs of the community and its families.

In order to plan for the components of a typical civic literacy program as defined in Table 5, usually a planning committee is formed. What a planning committee typically does is reviewed below.

The Work of the Overall Planning Committee

Initiating a civic literacy program is extremely challenging. Usually such efforts start with a core group of committed community partners willing to develop all aspects of a civic literacy initiative. Two of the major components for which a plan of action must be developed are the civic literacy education and the community building components. As many community leaders as possible and practical (given the scope of the effort envisioned) are involved to discuss the initiative and gauge interest and commitment. Potential participants, community leaders, and directors of relevant organizations are brought to the table. This initial group begins and others are brought in as plans evolve. The more inclusive the planning group is, the more community support is enjoyed. Generally speaking, the earlier the individuals are involved the more commitment they feel to such initiatives.

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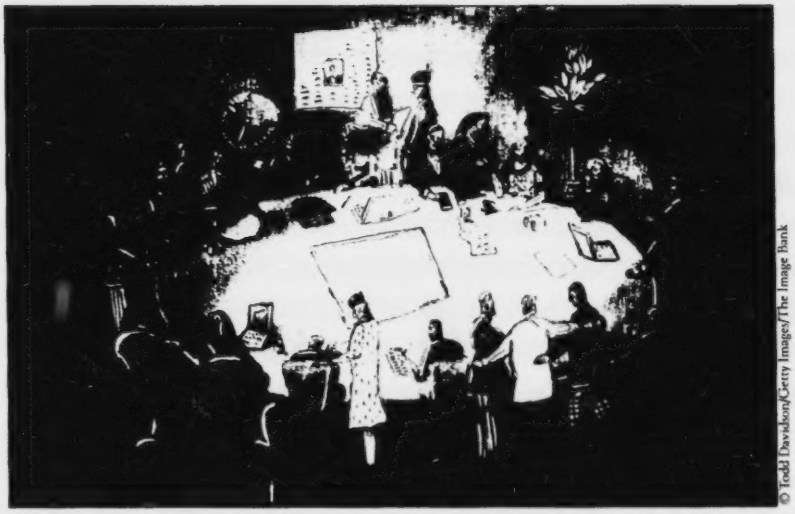

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Literacy council directors, selected nonprofit staff, healthy community representatives, interfaith council representatives, adult educators, university faculty, community leaders skilled at community dialog and development efforts, key business leaders, Chamber of Commerce representatives, financial leaders and neighborhood association leaders are typically involved in the beginning stages.

Use this report and the resources listed as a basis to begin conversations and planning. The resources listed will inevitably lead to others. Table 6 provides an overview of the planning phases.[35] Follow the guidance on effective community development practice presented in the next section of this report. Refer to the adult roles, skills and performance standards described in Equipped for the Future and found at the EFF web site - http://www.nifl.gov/lincs/collections/eff/.

Once the planning group is formed, tasks are usually assigned to various members of the group, depending on expertise and interest. Others are identified that can effectively plan certain phases of the work proposed. This group is often referred to as a steering committee for the initiative. This group oversees and often approves the work of those willing to assume responsibility for various tasks.

Good information is critical to good planning. One of the responsibilities of individuals on the steering committee is to be informed about the why, what, and how of civic literacy development and inform others. Each person brings their own strengths in different aspects of civic literacy development.

Civic literacy is a complex educational endeavor. The initial planning group must be very specific and realistic in setting goals. It is better to start small in goal setting. Brainstorming possibilities and listing all the goals that various leaders might want to set for the initiative are typical group process techniques commonly used to stimulate creativity. Using this larger list of possibilities that could be done priorities are set.

The scale of the civic literacy effort matters. The more citizens involved the more planning is required to effectively facilitate the "learning about" and "taking action" phases of civic literacy development. As mentioned previously, at the heart of civic literacy development is civic engagement around community development themes. As one is learning civic literacy skills, adults engage in conversations about what it means to be a citizen and an active community member. This usually is done in the context of discussions about everyday life and how well equipped their community is to meet their needs, keep them safe, healthy, employed, entertained, and happy. It usually involves conversations about how to become empowered to change the things and actions of others that negatively impact their lives. It involves discussions of social justice, equitable access to resources, opportunities, places and spaces. It involves coming to grips with the difference that exists among people. It involves learning to deal with conflict and differences of opinion. Below a few pointers are given in ways to mobilize adults as they learn to be active citizens and community members.

Table 6. Planning Steps for Starting Civic Literacy Programs

1. Bring together a diverse, collaborative planning group.
2. Provide comprehensive information on effective civic literacy programs to the planning group.
3. Identify the community civic literacy needs you will be addressing.
4. Identify the civic literacy assets your community has to assist you in meeting these needs.
5. Establish a common vision for your efforts and identify realistic initiative goals. (This is different from a vision for the community that is done with the community participants.)
6. Set realistic outcomes and measurements.
7. Identify the partners needed to accomplish goals and achieve outcomes.
8. Develop an initiative design that uses community resources.
9. Identify a site or sites for the literacy program.
10. Establish a staffing plan (volunteer and/or paid) that is sufficient to address goals.
11. Identify ways to address support services required by participants.
12. Identify the equipment and materials needed.
13. Develop a realistic funding plan that allows sufficient funds to accomplish goals and achieve outcomes.
14. Develop an evaluation plan that measures progress for participants and the program.
15. Develop a recruitment and retention plan for staff and participants.
16. Identify the civic literacy educational materials and community building process guides most useful to goals.
17. Establish participant recognition strategies.
18. Prepare a staff development plan.

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Because so much information is available about community-building processes, this booklet provides only a brief description of what has been done by civic literacy educators to sustained civic engagement. Community leaders interested in knowing more should review the works listed in the endnotes accompanying this section.

Typical Community Development Perspectives and Processes Employed

In many communities a growing sense of collective accountability and responsibility is present. Civic culture is changing in many places. The most dynamic examples demonstrate that when residents focus their conversation on what they can do collectively for their children as well as themselves, people get involved and things happen. When neighbors talk about improving their neighborhoods, things happen. From the hundreds of communities in America that have participated in civic literacy initiatives, common community-building orientations are found. These are briefly reviewed.

- *They use ecological definitions of civic literacy, civic engagement, community, human growth and development, justice, democracy.* They discuss what factors contribute to overall qualify of life and normal growth and development of children, youth and adults.[36] See Figure 1 for an ecological definition of civic literacy development within the context of human growth and development.
- *Communities create a shared vision from what the community values.* Visions that reflect the core values of its residents are both powerful and inspiring and compel people to action.[37] One major value of literacy development is that it helps people learn to plan ahead. This literacy skill affects positive one's ability to use resources in more effective ways and to understand better the cause/effect relationships of their individual and group actions.
- *They address quality of life for everyone.* Even if small groups of citizens are involved, community members strive to make the causal connections between improvement of their lives and how their actions will impact others.[38]
- *Community leaders build diverse citizen participation and community ownership in the process.* When visions and plans are developed and understood by community members, they are more apt to be sustained. More people become engaged in community affairs when they see things happen and feel they have positively influenced both what is done and how it is done.
- *Leaders focus on systems change.* Changing a system requires thinking and acting systemically. (Not just systematically.) They examine the nature and amount of organized human activity happening on a formal

and informal level. Leaders and community participants look at what information is shared and how. They examine public and private services, how they operate and are connected or disconnected. Business involvement is examined to see how they provide and deny access to necessary goods and services. Current community connections among people and organizations are examined and enhanced. New connections that support people and environments are created. Existing resources are made to flow to the people who need them. Resources are leveraged. Information flows are enhanced and created. Use Figure 1 as a basis for conversation about what primary and secondary settings are relevant to people's lives. Talk about the connections people have and need in order to improve their everyday life.

- *Leaders and community participants build capacity using local assets and resources*. They look at what the community has going for it relative to the improvements citizens begin to envision and the conditions necessary for improvement to occur. Endeavors are built by enhancing what already exists.[39]

  - *They benchmark and measure progress and outcomes*. Performance measures and community indicators are developed for the improvements sought and residents examine results and create appropriate actions to bring corrections needed. They hold themselves accountable by engaging in evaluation and the continual reporting of results of civic literacy efforts. They understand that timely, accurate information is very important to sustain action, leverage resources, and leaders recognize when to head in another direction.[40]

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These principles of practice are promoted by the Healthy Communities movement and by the family support movement (which has a community building emphasis to it as well as individual and family development). Each guideline can be turned into a question that participants in the civic literacy development process can ask themselves. Are we asset-oriented? Are we accountable? Are we directed toward outcomes and results? Are we visionary? Are we action-oriented? Are we practicing diversity in thought regarding whom we include, and do we allow for various kinds of improvements along the way? Are we thinking and acting systemically? Are we thinking ecologically in terms of civic literacy development? Are we promoting participation, democracy, social justice and respect for people's dignity?

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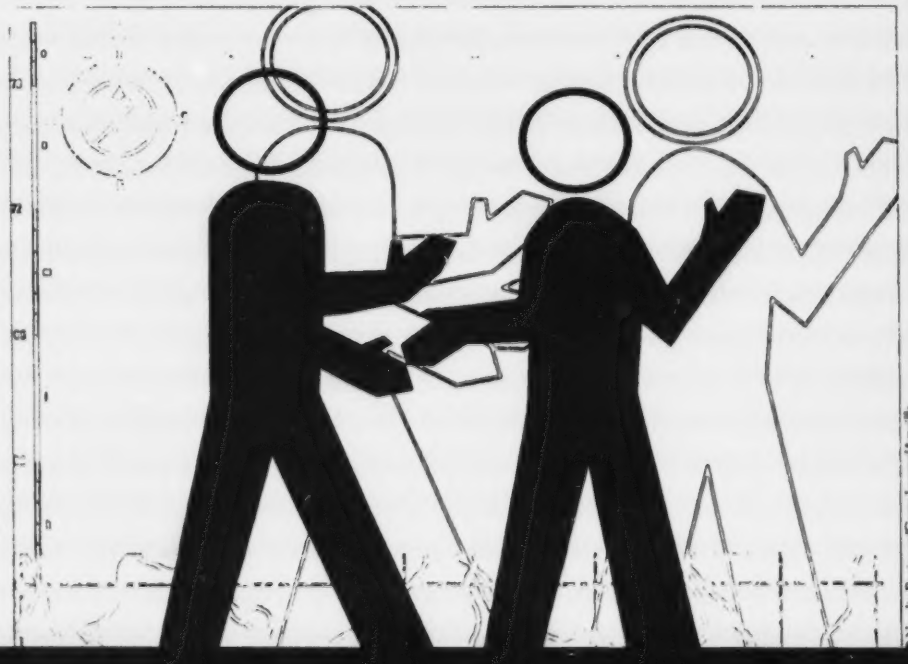
Learn to Continuously Lead, Learn, and Communicate. When striving to promote civic engagement while building civic literacy skills, successful leaders are found to engage in three key activities.[41] They must happen repeatedly and continuously. These three functions are 1) *leadership is sustained throughout the effort, 2) a lifelong learning orientation is built, and 3) effective, ongoing communication processes are necessary.*

Successful community building involves developing effective partnerships in setting directions for the community. It is critical to gather a diverse and critical mass of people to create long-term change. Healthy Community groups and First Steps initiatives in SC are good examples of effective partnership building. When effective community leaders lead, they are committed to building relationships of trust and caring, and aligning shared resources with community values. They share a commitment to targeted goals. Some groups lead effectively at the beginning but as time goes by their leadership becomes less active and less intentional. Effective initiatives are ones where *leadership is sustained and continuous.* Effective groups rotate leadership as time goes by so that leadership can be sustained, particularly if it is a voluntary effort. Partnerships help keep the leadership functions covered. When one is tired another can lead.

Secondly, community leaders and members learn how to learn together. Leaders are intentional in civic literacy education while engaging citizens in community action. Civic literacy "teachers" will become "students" along the way because, irrespective of general literacy levels, some participants will have knowledge about the improvement sought more than others. Community members learn to reflect continuously on their actions to ensure the community improvement happens effectively. Measurement and evaluation are a part of individual and group actions. They are tools for learning. Becoming a learning community entails a commitment to mutual accountability so that everyone benefits. Learning together becomes the springboard to lasting change and renewal. Learning together enhances civic literacy and general literacy skills.

The third sustained leadership action necessary is communicating meaningfully and routinely with community residents. The continual practice of meaningful community dialogue means developing authentic conversations that frame and ground issues, discover assets, promote critical thinking, allow and incorporate diversity of thought—giving expression of



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"To everything there is a season, and a time for every purpose under the heaven" sang the Hebrew poet in Ecclesiastes. When Pete Seeger put that ancient maxim to folk music in the 1960's, it was, perhaps, a season for Americans to unravel fetters of intrusive togetherness. As we enter a new century, however, it is now past time to begin to reweave the fabric of our communities."

Robert Putnam, Bowling Alone in America, page 402

what being a community that cares about people really means. Visions and action plans are only meaningful to those involved in creating them, because it is through conversation that social understanding is created. Those left out of the initial development must be brought in through conversation until the groups' meaning becomes their meaning. Visions and actions are promoted continuously to secure sustained community improvements. Community cohesion heightens through facilitated community conversation. It involves communicating often, boldly, and with compassion.

Civic Literacy Development in Action: Typical Phases of Civic Engagement. Although most community leaders would like a cookbook with step-by-step instructions for creating the kinds of changes featured in this report, experienced community leaders know that there is not just *one* way to go about civic literacy development. However, there are some key phases of community work that the most effective practitioners and researchers agree typically occurs.

While continuously leading, communicating, and learning, both the leaders and participants focus on different phases of community engagement over time. Six major phases of work are involved when people learn how to be active community members and citizens while learning civic literacy skills. As noted elsewhere, actions most often follow well-known community-building processes. These phases of civic engagement are presented as if one follows another. But in practice these phases can go on together, one by one, one before another, and repetitively.

One phase involves *assessing a community's readiness for action*. It involves assessing and engaging resources required to act wisely. In this instance, it involves seeing if more than one or two people want to work on improving adult civic literacy in your community or county. Getting all needed persons on board early makes all the difference in what is done, how it is done, and how effective the results are relative to the costs involved.

A second phase of action involves *energizing leaders to take action*. Once the core leadership is established and underway, new leaders are found as the effort becomes more broadly based. Leaders may need to learn new skills about how to collaborate and lead people through change processes. In other words, civic literacy educators may have to broaden their civic literacy skills! Because any given community change effort is, in many ways, something that has never happened before, leaders may need time to think it through and figure out the best ways to support each other. A plan must be created that addresses how to engage significant leaders and as many residents as possible.

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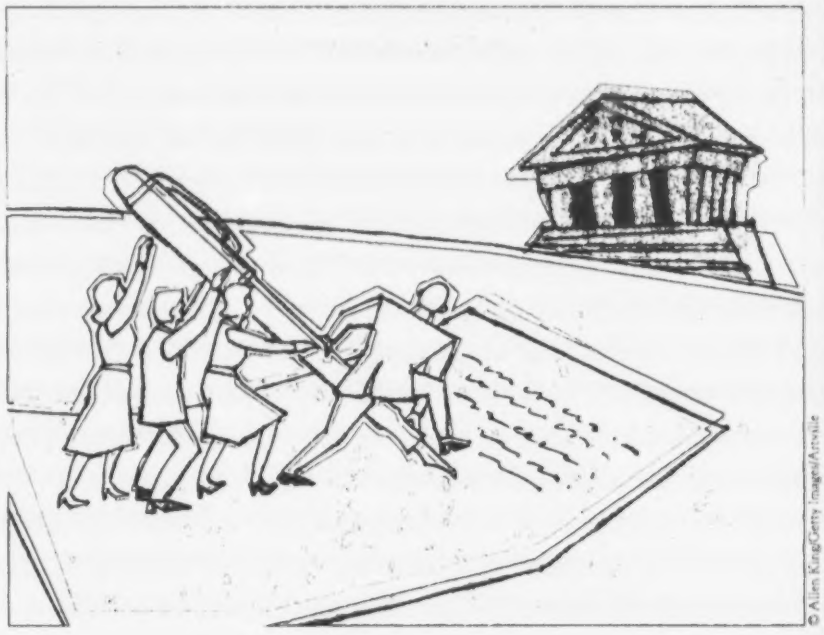
A third phase of action involves *defining activities that bring early wins*. Both short term and long term strategies are developed. Most people need to see benefits to their participation so tangible results need to be seen soon and often. Initiatives that can be achieved within a few months or less, a year or two are identified, while also keeping in mind the longer-term civic infrastructure development that is needed.

In order to complete typical community improvements a variety of different talents are tapped. Some are involved that have needed *content backgrounds* related to the focus of civic literacy discussion. For example, if citizens are talking about housing having someone that knows about housing development is helpful. People who know *how to handle conflict are involved* so that diverse thought is handled and incorporated appropriately during community discussions and planning sessions. People are involved who can *effectively lead conversations* so that everyone is given opportunity to express their opinions and so opinions are taken into account meaningfully. People are recruited who *can develop achievable action plans* that are based on people's visions and sense of outcomes desired. These are the kind of people who can take ideas and make them happen. They are gifted in making things concrete so that others can get involved and understand what to do.



A fourth community mobilizing phase is *energizing community members* to become involved. Providing civic literacy learning experiences enables people to become engaged in solving community issues that mean the most to them. For example, some people might be interested in improving play areas for children that have become unsafe while others might be more interested in forming after-school study centers that offer home work assistance or supervised recreational activities. Find ways to involve everyone meaningfully in producing the change envisioned. Continually equip citizens for meaningful, wise action by providing discussion about effective practices. Bring in other community groups to mentor residents. Provide many tools and examples of what might be done and why. People are energized when equipped with the skills summarized in Table 3 of this report.

A fifth community mobilization phase involves *clearly setting the direction for change*. A rich array of information should be gathered and presented to and by

community members so that they understand the situation they are trying to address. Community members need to do their own presentations based on the models provided by literacy educators. No matter what their literacy proficiency, community members should be involved in gathering their own information and making sense out of it. That helps develop literacy skills. Citizen actions need to be informed actions. The more community members gain opportunity to practice these skills the wiser their chosen courses of action will become.

A sixth phase of work involves *implementing the change desired.* Community members need to learn how to define pathways of improvement (often called "projects, strategies, action plans"). Community-wide efforts often have several pathways, with community members organized into task groups around their interests. Refine, enhance, and sustain initiatives by constantly reminding people of the positive outcomes envisioned by the group. Continuously remind those involved about the chosen processes to achieve chosen outcomes. This will help avoid the "grab any project that is my favorite project whether it fits or not" mentality. Avoid spectators (i.e., community members who watch others do all the work). Spectators are less likely to increase civic literacy skills. Interested community members should have meaningful tasks to do. Clearly link tasks to the actions and outcomes sought in a written plan of action. Sustained community action includes developing leadership capacities in community members and allocating necessary resources. Efforts may involve making policies that enforce and promote desired changes.

As community leaders learn to communicate continuously, orient their actions around proven guidelines of community practice, and lead citizens through the work phases outlined in this section, the community will mount significant, sustainable civic engagement initiatives and learn civic literacy skills and understandings while doing so.

Typical Adult Education and Communication Principles Employed

Successful civic literacy programs provide for five components: experiential adult education, articulation of civic literacy goals and values; implementation of community building processes planned by participants; and reflection on outcomes of the civic engagement process and civic learning outcomes. These have been reviewed in previous sections with the exception of the adult education principles employed. Civic literacy educators guide their education and communication practices using what we know are effective ways in which adults learn. These principles of practice are reviewed in Table 7.

Table 7. Adult Education Principles -
Guiding Civic Literacy Education and Communication Practices

1. Effective educators link new civic literacy learning to adults' prior civic engagement experiences.

2. They help adults meet specific civic literacy learning goals related to their own needs while engaged in role tasks related to being a community member or citizen.

3. They help adults meet specific civic literacy learning goals related to their role as educator of other community members' civic literacy needs.

4. Their civic literacy instruction is experientially based. They learn while doing. They reflect on what they have done. They try again based on greater understanding and improved skills.

5. They are able to assess various learning styles of adults and communicate new civic literacy information and skills to them in ways they understand it.

6. Their civic literacy learning experiences are contextual—the learning is structured to address the situations of interest to community members.

7. They communicate effectively with adults who have differing ways in which they think about and take action on community improvement or citizen involvement situations.

8. They are able to work in a variety of community improvement settings with a variety of different types of community leaders.

9. They effectively involve adults in planning their own civic literacy learning.

10. They market their efforts in effective ways.

11. They understand that retention of adults in civic literacy programs is a problem and act accordingly.

12. They reward adults who have successfully completed community improvement efforts and accomplished more effectively civic literacy tasks (See Table 3).

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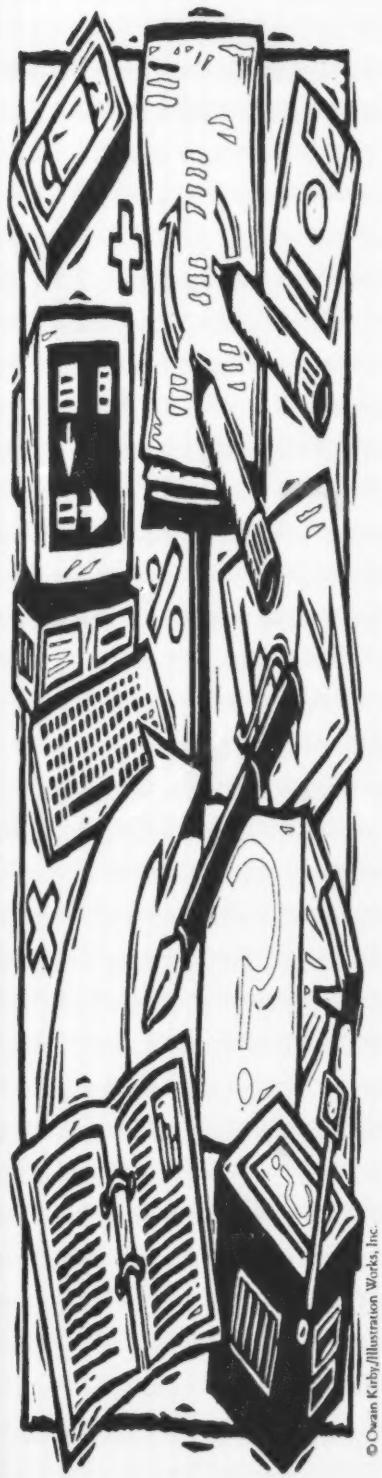

Applying these principles is hard work. It takes thinking and acting outside the traditional "schooling" instructional box. By creating positive experiences of shared learning, one has to think like a community builder who builds community. Recruitment and retention rates often directly relate to how successful one is in applying these principles of education and communication. Reaching learning outcomes such as those mentioned previously are conditioned on using these principles effectively.

10 Areas To Pay Attention To In Sustaining Effective Civic Literacy Initiatives

Previously we reviewed the work of the planning committee at the beginning of an initiative. What follows is a review of the on-going work required of both the planning committee and the leaders tasked with managing the entire initiative. The more attention given to these areas of program development, the more sustained civic literacy will become.

1. **Planning** Planning a civic literacy initiative usually starts with a few leaders representing a variety of community sectors such as business, education, human services, transportation, and health. Someone has to lead. While leadership may change once the effort is started, establishing a leadership team and clearly assigning roles and responsibilities are important steps. Develop a plan for what you want to do, how and why. Identify the community building processes and outcomes sought. Identify the civic literacy development process and outcomes related to each phase of the community building process. Clearly articulate outcomes desired. The community building processes chosen need to logically achieve outcomes sought.

2. **Recruitment** It is an active and ongoing process. It incorporates a range of activities from one-on-one conversations with neighbors to public awareness campaigns.

3. **Support Services** Leaders work with community members to identify and overcome physical and emotional barriers to access and participation. Examples of physical barriers include transportation and child care. Examples of emotional barriers include fear of expressing oneself in public, low self-esteem, fear of retaliation by community authorities, and becoming anxious because they do not know how to make the improvements they want to make.

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4. **Staffing** Those leading the effort must be knowledgeable and have skills in community engagement and civic literacy development. Personal characteristics are considered as important as professional credentials. Desired characteristics include: works collaboratively, is flexible and can respond appropriately to differences in cultures and groups, clearly demonstrates respect for participants and program partners. At least some of the leaders have to be able to appreciate and deal effectively with complexity to avoid narrowing discussion too soon and limiting options for action. Some leaders must be able to think and act from multiple perspectives and know how to help others do the same. This sometimes is referred to as being cross-culturally competent or being able to deal with diversity.

5. **Collaboration** Civic literacy efforts necessitate collaborations. Participants may need to learn what collaborative group processes are and be led effectively through their formation. The expertise of community members becomes an integral part of program resources. Leaders collaborate with surrounding agencies to avoid duplication of efforts and meet the comprehensive needs of participants and communities. They serve as catalysts in adapting community services to better meet the needs of citizens and community members.

6. **Retention** Particularly with civic engagement, retention can be a problem if community members do not feel that they have a voice or know how to do what has been proposed. Developing small learning/support groups help people learn from each other and teach each other. Intentionally pausing to see where participants are at in their level of comfort in civic literacy development is important. When adults understand how their learned skills apply to their daily lives, they tend to stay involved. They also tend to stay involve when they are aware of concrete examples of progress and regularly experience success. When participants are recognized and have opportunities

to celebrate their achievements, they then stay involved. Combining family and health literacy with civic literacy efforts attracts the more adults and also keeps longer participation. When civic engagement is made a family matter, more tend to volunteer and engage. Men are more apt to become engaged if family members are engaged.

7. **Training** Leaders and participants will need training as they go forward with their plans. Leaders may need their civic literacy skills increased first and then proceed to train community members. It is useful to have experienced coaches available. It is also effective to invite trusted community members to participate who demonstrate good civic literacy skills. Civic literacy skills have to be seen as something that participants can obtain. Asking community participants what they want to learn is as important as providing what is needed, based on standards of civic literacy education (as defined in the EFF guidelines).

8. **Community building processes combined with civic literacy development** There are several sources to use to guide the process of civic literacy education. The basic processes were reviewed in the prior section of this report. The processes chosen must be meaningful and useful in the daily lives of adults. Leaders must understand them. Educational and civic engagement processes are best when collaboratively designed, theoretically sound, and clearly modified for individual, cultural and program differences and objectives. Materials need to be developmentally and age appropriate. Instructional approaches for adults should respond to the variety of cultures present. EFF standards developed through the National Institute for Literacy are used as a basis for civic literacy education.

> *America will lead by defending liberty and justice because they are right and true and unchanging for all people everywhere. No nation owns these aspirations, and no nation is exempt from them. We have no intention of imposing our culture—but America will always stand firm for the non-negotiable demands of human dignity, the rule of law, limits on the power of the state, respect for women, private property, free speech, equal justice, and religious tolerance.*
>
> *President Bush in his State of the Union Speech, January 30, 2002*

9. **Funding** When civic literacy initiatives are planned as an on-going part of a community's adult literacy initiative rather than a time-limited project, then funding must be found to sustain efforts. Even some short-term efforts will need to be funded. For longer-term efforts, a diversified funding base in needed. Most secure some public dollars (through such programs as

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community development block grant funds), some private dollars (through donations from private businesses or private foundations), and contracts and grants (from public and private sources). In some instances, fees for services provided is an option. Contributions from faith-based organizations and in-kind cost sharing arrangements are also done. The leadership team must develop a realistic funding plan that provides stability, opportunities for growth and enhancements, and multiple funding sources. Create a doable funding strategy by involving community members familiar with financing community programs.

10. **Evaluation** An evaluation plan provides regular assessments that inform participants, leaders, the community and funders. Evaluations of civic engagement efforts and civic literacy learning outcomes are done. Participants, leaders and community members use evaluation results to regularly celebrate successes and to improve future results.[42]

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Words of Advice from the Field On What To Avoid

Not every civic literacy program is able to demonstrate success. Researchers studying civic literacy programs have identified particular areas of practice that tend to sidetrack initiatives. They are much the same as those found in health and family literacy initiatives.

When planning and operating civic literacy programs:

- Collaborate with other civic literacy projects and personnel within the community. Invest time in collaborative relationships, communicate frequently, seek resources and expertise from community partners, and seek mentors among established programs.
- Be realistic about program goals. Decide the number of community members that can realistically be served. Realize that delays and unanticipated problems are inevitable and that program start-up takes a great deal of time and energy; don't get discouraged.[43]

Avoid these weaknesses:

- Lack of theoretical support for the development of civic literacy program components. Many programs have no coherent framework or design. There is a tendency to create a civic literacy framework by taking bits and pieces from various commercial materials and packaged curricula which may to a hodgepodge of materials and activities. Typical failure is due to not clearly defining the civic literacy skills to be developed and not linking skill development with clearly articulated processes of civic engagement.
- Unbalanced efforts that stress either the community building processes or the civic literacy development processes to the exclusion of the other.
- Assessments done by outsiders that do not evaluate the pedagogy used or are insensitive to individual progress and the specific civic engagement efforts done.
- Outdated, irrelevant training or learning materials. (e.g. prepackaged community discussion guides that do not easily lend themselves to modification, or civic engagement processes designed without theoretical backing).
- Rigid adherence to procedures in a set model or plan (e.g. following a particular discussion or visioning process that is not sensitive to the context or life experiences of those involved).
- Narrow perspectives on civic literacy development, often evident in a single focus on adult education. Some forget to teach civic literacy skills at all.
- Inadequate leadership training and high turnover of paid and volunteer leaders with little communication between community leaders about what has been done previously.
- Insecure funding, which can lead to an unstable, stressed, disengaged leadership.
- Targeting a transient population that must focus on survival before considering the value of literacy.[44] With community partners, civic literacy programs must address individual and family issues in order to improve neighborhood and community stability.
- No or little evaluation done- often the weakest aspect of literacy programs of all kinds.

By following guidance presented in this report, communities will be armed with a good foundation for designing an effective and successful program.

How Do We Measure Success?

Measuring success is important to at least four population groups: participants, program staff and board/advisory group, community leaders, and funders. Therefore, civic literacy planners should identify criteria and measurements that provide information needed by all four groups.

It is beyond the scope of this report to go at length into what is involved in the development of effective evaluations that support civic literacy initiatives. This report stresses one key point. If leaders do not define the outcomes they want, as a result of civic literacy efforts, then it is impossible to properly evaluate the civic literacy effort. Definitions of desired outcomes must accommodate the desires and definitions of the funders, the participants, the staff, and their partners/advisory board/board. If left unarticulated, too many people will want too many different things to happen. If leaders do not define outcomes, someone else will and hold leaders accountable to criteria not of their choosing. External evaluator criteria are usually different from the leaders of such efforts. To avoid some criticisms, it is expedient for leaders to establish a sound evaluation program and to continuously discuss outcomes as you go.

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See the National Adult Literacy Survey, the Search Institute, the National Civic League, the Center for Civic Education, the US Department of Education/Vocational and Adult Education, the Civic Practices Network, and Sage Publications for resources to guide the development of evaluation efforts.

Francine Jacob's Five-Tier Approach to evaluation is used by many as a basis for the framework around which to design an evaluation program.[45] Her framework addresses differences in information needed for the four groups (participants, staff, community leaders, funders) and provides practical suggestions on how to obtain it.

A place to begin development of civic literacy outcomes for adult learners is to use Tables 2 and 3 of this report. Both tables provide learning outcome statements. These outcomes can become the basis for developing measures of learning gains.

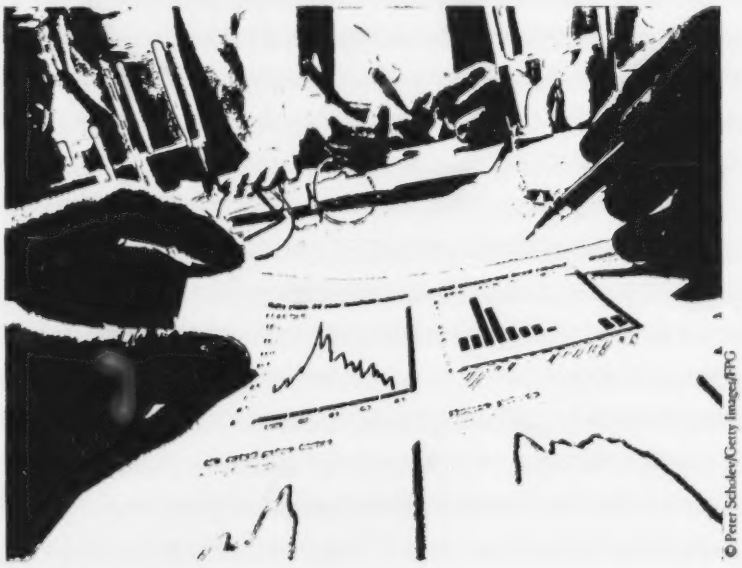
What Resources Are Available?

To provide further assistance in planning and operating a successful civic literacy program, the following resources are listed to expand your knowledge base and lead you to other valuable resources.

As stressed throughout this report, civic literacy skills are most often successfully developed while engaging adults in community-building efforts of various kinds and sizes (i.e. experiential learning). Leaders need a vast array of resources to consult while working with citizen groups. Some of the organizations that have resources to draw on are reviewed in this section.

Examples of Quality of Life and Benchmark Reports and Processes

In the What Are Civic Literacy Initiatives Like section of this report, one type of civic literacy initiative reviewed dealt with civic literacy development while engaging in quality of life discussions. Several community initiatives that developed such reports are reviewed here because they are particularly sensitive to creating ways to measure and think about civic engagement, social justice, and civic literacy. Hundreds of communities have developed such reports in the U.S. More importantly hundreds of community members have gone through visioning exercises which are very good at increasing many of the basic skills found in Table 1, 2 and 3 of this report, particularly if the facilitators aim at civic literacy skill development as part of the process. A more complete review of community quality of life discussions and products is available by consulting the Institute on Family and Neighborhood Life, South Carolina Center on Grassroots and Nonprofit Leadership's web site. (See http://www.sclc.clemson.edu) This same web site lists data sources that community groups use to construct their report. The review of these community reports first



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appeared in *Urban Quality Indicators* and is used here with permission. The author has updated and amplified the descriptions to be in keeping with the needs of this report.

Grand Traverse Region, MI - *Quality of Life Indicators*
The program is coordinated by the Grand Traverse Regional Community Foundation and Northwestern Michigan College with representatives from 5 participating counties. Ten indicator domains and about 100 indicators are given. The 1998 Annual Report is online. Special sections include indicators on family life, recreation, ethical and civil norms.
http://qualityindex.nmc.edu/intro.html

Hamilton & Wentworth County, Ontario - *Vision 2020*
Vision 2020 is lead by the Regional Municipality of Hamilton-Wentworth. Annual reports are online for 1995 to 1999 with trends on 25 indicators. Vision 2020 covers indicators on community well being and capacity building which is one whole section of their community report.
http://www.vision2020.hamilton-went.on.ca/indicators/index.html

Indianapolis - *Central Indiana Quality of Life Index*
Lead by the Central Indiana Regional Citizens League. To develop their indicators they put an on-line survey of quality of life in 12 categories to let Central Indiana residents rate what they thought was most important. Spiritual and social environments and civic involvement were two of the categories explored.
http://www.citizensleague.net/default.htm

Jacksonville, FL - *Indicators of Quality of Life*
One of the longest running efforts in the U.S. Designed by the City of Jacksonville, Jacksonville Chamber of Commerce, and the Jacksonville Community Council, Inc. (JCCI), it began in 1985. Of about 70 indicators, 9 are rated as key indicators. On-line reports include many graphs of trends going back to the 1980s. Government and politics, racism and discrimination, voter turnout are some of the areas covered relative to civic engagement. Their reports have been used by hundreds of communities across the US as a basis for structuring their own reports and community discussions.
http://www.jcci.org/indic.htm

Kissammee & Osceola County, FL - *Community Report*
A project of the area's Community Vision Assessment Team, it is one of six such projects nationwide. Indicators are keyed to 5 Community Objectives and 9 Community Strategies. Trends are graphed. One section of special interest is their section on community belonging.
http://www.communityvision.org/

Missoula, MT - *Missoula Measures*.
Created by the Missoula City-County Health Dept. For each of the indicators, data ratings are included as to availability, reliability, and relevancy. There are also

comparisons to other cities and the state, and many useful links. Of special interest are their sections on healthy democracy, volunteerism, art and culture but they have many indicators on the environment, economy and social life of the community.
http://www.co.missoula.mt.us/measures/index.html

New York City - *Social Indicators Survey*
Federal Reserve Bank of New York and the New York City Social Indicators Survey Center of Columbia University produce this annual report. The survey tracks the consequences of policy reform for a variety of income assistance and social service programs. Of special interest are their sections on inequality in income, health, and other outcomes.
http://www.ny.frb.org/rmaghome/econ_pol/999mmey.pdf

Olympia, WA - *Sustainable Community Roundtable*.
The Roundtable, initiated by the City of Olympia in 1991, was incorporated as an independent nonprofit organization in 1992. The group has been tracking sustainability indicators since 1993, first in two *State of the Community Reports* in 1993 and 1995, and subsequently in *State of the Community Updates* in 1996, 1997, and 1998 - most are available online. A cutting edge project, with very readable reports. Of special interests are their sections on the New Economy indicators, environmental footprint, social capital, Genuine Progress Indicators, children, and youth.
http://www.olywa.net/roundtable/

St. Louis - *Where We Stand*
East-West Gateway Coordinating Council, incorporated in 1965, provides a forum for cooperative problem solving. Membership includes officials of the City of St. Louis and adjacent counties. Their efforts track about 100 indicators in 8 domains. St. Louis is compared with 34 other large metro areas. The huge 1999 report is online, and includes trend data from 1992 on. Special interests areas include demographic trends, a Sense of Community Index, a Culture and Recreation Index, and an Infrastructure Index.
http://stlouis.bcentral.com/stlouis/stories/1996/12/23/editorial1.html

Silicon Valley, CA (San Jose area) - *Economic Indicators+*
This is a joint effort of the Economic Policy Institute and Working Partnerships USA. Complete 1998 report is online and includes many aspects of quality of life, not just the economic. Of special interest are their indicators of the New Economy and economic inequality.
http://www.atwork.org/

Spokane - *Community Report Card*
Sponsored by the Spokane Regional Health District. The complete 1998 report is online and covers trends in 12 quality of life domains. Of special interest are their sections on civic participation, health, and diversity and community-oriented outcomes.
http://www.spokanecounty.org/health/CA/ReportCard/index.htm

Tampa & Hillsborough Co. - *Benchmarks*
Hillsborough Tomorrow citizens group in cooperation with the County of Hillsborough and others sponsor this report and community conversation. The 1997 report is available online, but you must sign in with name and address to retrieve it. Huge amount of data but could be presented better. Of special interests are their sections on demographics and diversity (linked with social justice concerns).
http://www.fccdr.usf.edu/projects/hilltoday.htm

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Toronto - *Healthy City*
Lead by the Healthy City Office, City of Toronto. The healthy community movement started here. The project bases its data gathering and trend analysis on issues raised in the 1998-2001 State of the City Report. Of special interest are their sections on equity, older citizens, safety, affordable housing, and the environment.
http://www.city.toronto.on.ca/healthycity/index.htm

Toronto - *Vital Signs*
Sponsored by the Toronto Community Foundation. They recently began an Annual Report on Toronto's vital signs, or indicators, in ten quality domains. Colorful web site. Of special interest are their sections on relationships among people and communities and participation in local offerings.
http://www.torontovitalsigns.com

Toronto - *Lakeshore Community Audit Project*.
Lakeshore Community Audit Project citizens group leads this effort. The site includes an online quiz to get residents thinking about their quality of life. A Community Report Card is in the works, to be translated into several languages. Of special interest are their sections on cultural well being, environmental indicators, and measurement of diversity.
http://www.lefca.com/lampchc/Programs/cauditi.html

Ontario Quality of Life Index (QLI).
Lead by the Ontario Social Development Council. The 1999 report is online and includes a snappy format somewhat different from most other reports. The text is supplied via "News Clips on Quality of Life Issues." Of special interest is their Index itself, which has a "composite value" of 100. Each of 12 cities in Ontario is rated on the Index, some even achieving scores of over 100. One can see the potential of an index for various communities within a county.
http://www.qli-ont.org/indexe.html

Oregon Benchmarks (also called *Oregon Shines*):
Lead by the Oregon Progress Board. This landmark project once included over 200 indicators and targets, but now focuses on 25 key ones and 92 overall (see Appendix A of *Oregon Shines II*). Start at the Progress Board's web site, and then focus on 2 or 3 of the several reports listed. These include the 1999 Benchmark Performance Report (beautiful report layout), and *Oregon Shines II* (the state's strategic plan based on benchmark performance). There is even a report with benchmark data by county. Targets are offered for years 2000 and 2010. Of special interest are their sections on measuring social support networks, land preservation (wetlands, forests, and agriculture) and the economy. Oregon Shines is one of four reports used by many groups nationwide to pattern their own efforts after.
http://www.econ.state.or.us/opb/

Sustainable Measures-An Online Resource Library
Useful resources and links on all aspects of sustainability of the human, built and natural environment. Reviews numerous communities that have indicator projects. Sustainable Measures develops indicators that "measure progress toward a sustainable economy, society and environment." The goals of the web site are to explain what indicators are, how indicators relate to sustainability, how to identify good indicators of sustainability, and how indicators can be used to measure progress toward building a sustainable community. The site includes a searchable database of several hundred indicators in 12 categories, each indicator rated from 1 (low) to 13 (high) on its value as an indicator of community sustainability. An extensive list of keywords is provided to help in searching the database. The results of a search even include what cities and agencies are using the indicator. In addition to having very useful content, the site is a pleasure visually, and fun to use.
http://www.sustainablemeasures.com/Resources/WebLinks.html

Progress in Indicator Development-Healthy Cities movement.
Gives indicators and stories of communities doing indicator projects. Aimed at creating Healthy Communities worldwide.
http://www.healthycities.org/docs/progindev.htm

Redefining Progress - Community Indicator Projects on the Web
The Community Indicators section of this large site is divided into 4 sections: CINet Listserve, profiles of community indicator projects, projects on the web, and frequently asked questions about community indicators. Of special interests are their Genuine Progress Indicator section and the ecological footprint.
http://www.rprogress.org/resources/cip/links/cips_web.html

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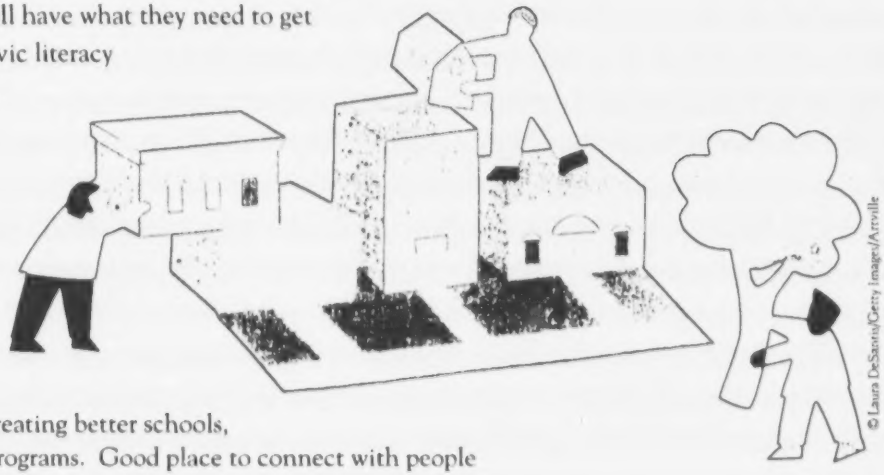
Civic Literacy Resources From A to Z

Many organizations were mentioned throughout this report. A brief description of each is found below along with their web address. By consulting these resources leaders will have what they need to get started and sustain all aspects of a civic literacy initiative as described in this report.



A

ACORN
Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now. Currently focused on predatory lending issues, affordable housing, creating better schools, utilities, community reinvestment programs. Good place to connect with people and get information.
http://www.acorn.org/

Adult Education and Family Literacy Act of 1998
http://www.ed.gov/offices/OVAE/AdultEd/InfoBoard/legis.html

Alliance for National Renewal
A National Civic League program for "Unleashing the Power of Communities."
http://www.ncl.org/anr/

American Civic Forum
A discussion forum created by the Center of Democracy and Citizenship at the Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs in Minnesota that is created to advance notions of a new citizenship and to help people exchange experiences and enhance civic work across many environments. Their call for a new citizenship document is interesting and could be used in neighborhood chat sessions, or faith-based group study sessions.
http://www.publicwork.org

American Friends Service Committee
Great A-Z listing of issues. If your community is forming issue statements check out this site for insight on how to frame them.
http://www.afsc.org/about.htm

Argus Clearinghouse
Research library on selected topics including places and people, government, health, recreation and social issues. Go to their "social issues topics" and click on "communities and urban planning".
http://www.clearinghouse.net/

Asset-Based Community Development Institute
Several useful resources for doing asset inventories on neighborhood resources and determining all the different kinds of networks people belong to on which to build improvements.
http://www.nwu.edu/IPR/abcd.html

Association for Conflict Resolution
This is a merged organization of the three best known entities providing training on conflict resolution. The Academy of Family Mediators, the Conflict Resolution Education Network and the Society of Professionals in Dispute Resolution have merged into this new Association. It is the primary organization in America to train people in dispute resolution in business, family, friendship, and community organizational contexts.
http://acresolution.org/

B

Best Practices
Searchable database of solutions to the common social, economic, and environmental problems of urbanization. Oriented towards resources neighborhood groups can use.
http://www.bestpractices.org/

Building Better Communities Network
An information clearinghouse and forum dedicated to building inclusive communities and to successfully siting affordable housing and community services.
http://www.bettercommunities.org/

C

Center for Budget and Policy Priorities
A research institute that conducts studies on a range of policies and programs that affect low-income people and communities. Good resource if citizens begin discussing issues related to poverty conditions.
http://www.cbpp.org/

Center for Civic Education
A nationally recognized leader in the development of networks, programs, curriculum, and training efforts for schools. They cover K-12. They have many items available online. Some of their resources can be modified for use with adults in community settings.
http://www.civiced.org/

The Center for Civic Networking
An organization applying "information systems" to the needs of civic groups. See their civic dialog and participation projects in particular.
http://www.civic.net:2401/ccn.html

Center for Community Change
Very good resources on housing, community development, many community building tools to use, also sensitive to policy analysis, has sample nonprofit bylaws, fund-raising helps, how to write proposal guidelines, how to work with your board of directors helps, and managing meetings guidelines.
http://www.communitychange.org/default.asp

Center for Law and Social Policy
Seeks to provide help to improve the economic conditions of low-income families and to open access of the civic justice system to the poor. Wealth of policy-related resources. Sensitive to children, family, youth policy and social justice issues.
http://www.clasp.org/

Center for Living Democracy
The Americans News Service is available through Center for Living Democracy. This is a community organizing resource. The newsletter covers many topics. 10 new community organization stories a week can be found here. Offers a searchable story bank of over 1100 solutions stories. Also has focus on interracial democracy.
http://www.americannews.com/

Center for Neighborhood Technology
Tools and resources for creating livable communities.
http://www.cnt.org/

Center for Urban and Metropolitan Policy
Good research topic series. Good section on neighborhood innovations and civic engagement.
http://www.brook.edu/es/urban/urban.htm

Change Communications
One of the must see sites. Has case studies, best practices, sustainable development, housing, community development, communicating change information. Good links section.
http://www.change.org/links.htm

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Charlotte's Web Community Network
Serves the Charlotte NC area, a 24-hour education and government site with a variety of resources. The audience is local residents and leaders and what voluntary association leaders need to deal with issues in the Charlotte NC region. Referred to by many as a success story. Great example of getting needed information out to people.
http://www.charweb.org

Children's Defense Fund
Resources related to helping communities give children a head start, safe start, moral start, healthy start, fair start in life. Good for community groups that focus on children's issues as a gateway to civic engagement.
http://www.childrensdefense.org/

Civic Network Television
Broadcasts useful live, interactive TV programs of civic literacy themes. Community groups are able to connect to these sessions.
http://www.benton.org/library/inventing/civic.html

Civic Practices Network
A collaborative project bringing together organizations and perspectives on civic participation. Good tools and resources section. See their civic map section if interested in asset mapping. Rich resources of ideas and materials to use. Their "tool" section has many very useful guides.
http://www.cpn.org/

CivNet
An online resource and service for civic education practitioners. Contains useful lesson plans and readings. Useful materials defining basic concepts of civic virtue, civic participation, civic knowledge. Has online the National Standards for Civics and Government that guides states in development of curriculum for K-12.
http://www.civnet.org/

Coalition for Healthier Cities and Communities
The primary site for learning how to start a Healthy Community project and gain access to success stories and useful resources and networks.
http://www.healthycommunities.org/

Coalition on Human Needs
Great archive resource by topic on human needs. Very good place to access thoughtful essays. Site addresses the needs of low income and vulnerable populations. Good site for those working to alleviate poverty conditions.
http://www.chn.org/

Coalition for Low Income Community Development
Great site on mapping your community, citizen participation and planning, citizen involvement in the use of HUD's Community Development Block Grants.
http://www.clicd.org/about/index.htm

Communitarian Network
A coalition of individuals and organizations that have come together to shore up the moral, social, and political environment. They are nonsectarian, nonpartisan, and an international association. Their publications will make you think!
http://www.gwu.edu/~ccps/

Communities and Economic Development Corporations Sites
20 sites rated the best for information on community economic development. Great place to check out success stories as well as the rich library of tools available from these sites.
http://www.ppnd.org/ustop20.htm

Community Economic Development
A must see link site of major organizations and resources for voluntary associations, nonprofits and community coalitions who begin work on community economic development themes. Many examples combine civic literacy, general literacy skill development with community economic development initiatives.
http://www.mts.net/~imoore/ced1.htm

Community Networking Movement
Lots of resources on what community networking is all about and how to form networks. Good online guides available to community groups.
http://www.scn.org/ip/commnet/home.html

Community Policing Consortium
A major source for resources, discussions, helps on community policing programs. A must if your group is into safety issues in community and neighborhood settings.
http://www.communitypolicing.org/

Community Tool Box
As the name implies this site is fast becoming one of the most frequently consulted web sites. A wealth of idea, resources and tools are available through this site. There are chat rooms to get help from others. Civic literacy initiatives are featured, among many other types of community effort.
http://ctb.lsi.ukans.edu/

Community Wealth Ventures, Inc.
Helping community groups build successful wealth-generating enterprises. Good case study section. Practical ideas on small-scale enterprise development by nonprofits and voluntary associations. Good resources for groups that combine civic literacy and wealth generation projects.
http://www.communitywealth.org/

Consensus Organizing Institute
Provides practical helps on leading citizens through consensus group discussion processes.
http://consensusorganizing.com/

Context Institute
For groups wanting to build humane sustainable cultures.
http://www.context.org/

Cooperatives
A resource site for cooperatives working on environmental, housing, micro-enterprise, economic development, and growth projects.
http://csf.colorado.edu/co-op/

Corporation for Enterprise Development
Check out their *Development Report Card for the States: Economic Benchmarks for State and Corporate Decision-Makers*. One of the best sources of user-friendly, detailed business and economic data in the country. More than 70 indicators measuring everything from human resources to digital infrastructure. Great online resources. Good healthy community resources.
http://www.cfed.org/

Corporation for National Service
Information and resources on programs such as AmeriCorps and Senior Corps. If you work with volunteers this is a good site to check out.
http://www.cns.gov/

E

Electronic Policy Network
It is a digest of some of the best features of the week from a variety of resources related to community development policy issues.
http://www.epn.org/

Enterprise Foundation
One of the leading organizations in the US to provide resources to nonprofits involved in community development and also to neighborhood associations.

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several databases on effective practices. Good library of success stories. Has a technical assistance service for fee. Particularly useful to leaders focusing on affordable housing, community development corporations and building civic literacy competencies.
http://www.enterprisefoundation.org/

F

Families USA Foundation
This is an advocacy organization for health care consumers. Sensitive to children and senior health care issues and affordable health care. Good if this is the slant of conversation that is meaningful to the adults involved in civic literacy education.
http://www.familiesusa.org/

Family Support America
Family Support America, formerly Family Resource Coalition of America, promotes family support as the nationally recognized movement to strengthen and support families and places the principles of family support practice at the heart of every setting in which children and families are present. Family Support America works to bring about a completely new societal response to children, youth, and their families: one that strengthens and empowers families and communities so that they can foster the optimal development of children, youth, and adult family members —one that solves problems by preventing them. This is the organization that developed the principles of family support practice that are excellent guidelines for effective family literacy programs. Family Support is an approach to services that fits perfectly with family literacy programs. This web site will offer resources needed by family literacy programs to provide the support services families need in order to realize their goals. Through the development of family support civic literacy education is stressed and supported. It is the primary site to consult for those leaders who combine the design of family and civic literacy development.
http://www.familysupportamerica.org/content/home.htm

Federal Money Retriever
Good sight to search for possible sources of money from federal government sources.
http://www.fedmoney.com/

FedWorld
A search engine done by the U.S. Department of Commerce on databases available through the federal government. Very useful if you need to compile information on your area.
http://www.fedworld.gov/

The Foundation Center
The primary site in the US for finding grants and contracts, good e-learning opportunities, provides readers with an online Philanthropy Digest.
http://fdncenter.org/

G

Gaia Ecovillage Network
Global Ecovillage Network has worked for years on sustainable community efforts. Good site to check out if your group is working on healthy communit / and sustainable environment initiatives combined with civic literacy development.
http://www.gaia.org/

Grassroots Economic Organizing
Dedicated to making a better world by helping groups form worker cooperatives, sustainable community enterprises, and grassroots economic organizing. Good newsletter for those interested in these topics.
http://www.geonewsletter.org/

H

HandsNet
A primary site for human service nonprofits. Good resources, alerts to policy shifts, alerts to funding opportunities, and thoughtful essays on current social issues. Success stories featured routinely. Useful particularly if adults focus civic engagement on creating or revising social services in their community.
http://www.handsnet.org/

The Healthcare Forum
A primary national nonprofit membership organization involved in the Healthy Communities movement is The Healthcare Forum. It was a catalyst in the U.S. for creation of healthier communities. It conducts Healthier Communities Summits, an Executive Education series, Learning Collaborative; Commitment to Quality and Healthier Communities awards. All these promote civic literacy skills development. See http://www.thfnet.org

Highlander Center
Since 1932 this center has been on the cutting edge of Appalachian and Southern struggles for justice. Their work is known and used internationally and across the U.S. It is the primary site to consult if you are working on social justice, economic justice, environmental justice issues. The links section of their web site will open the world of kindred spirits and resources to you.
http://www.highlandcenter.org/

Home Sight
Comprehensive guide to housing resources. Will be very valuable to groups that engage in housing rehab projects while improving civic literacy skills (and literacy skills in general).
http://www.homesight.org/

Housing Assistance Council
Helping local groups build affordable homes. See links section to get into the resources available on the web for affordable housing projects and affordable housing loans. Their Rural Voices Newsletter is very interesting.
http://www.ruralhome.org/

Humanistic Banking
A major resource in pointing readers to alternative banking schemes to aid people in poverty to begin acquiring assets and building small businesses. These schemes appeal to those that are frozen out of the ability to gain access to credit. This web site will introduce the reader to microcredit programs and community banks. The ShoreBank, Grameen Bank, Bank of North Dakota, Self-Help of North Carolina, The Barefoot Bank, and the Microcredit Summit homepages can all be accessed through this site. (These are the most often referenced models.)
http://www.sfworlds.com/linkworld/banking.html

I

Information Exchange
While this site is from Australia, it has very useful information of a variety of topics related to neighborhood and community development done by voluntary associations as well as nonprofits and public agencies. This overarching theme is community development for social justice.
http://www.infoxchange.net.au/

Institute for the Study of Civic Values
Interesting discussions and resources available on civic participation and neighborhood revitalization.
http://www.iscv.org/

K

Kettering Foundation
The Foundation has treated politics as a dimension of everyday life rather than as only what officeholders and governments do. They craft tools for citizens to use to help the public act responsibility and effectively on its problems. It has a number of resources that are useful to civic literacy educators.
http://www.kettering.org

L

Labor Net
Global online information and communication about independent labor movements. Will be particularly useful to groups discussing issues related to healthy and affirmative work environments.
http://www.labornet.org/

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Laboratory for Community and Economic Development
Good resources, helpful guides, a swap story corner.
http://www.ag.uiuc.edu/~lced/main.html

Latino Health Institute
The Latino Health Institute researches, assesses and documents the health conditions of the Latino community. They develop, deliver, evaluate and disseminate culturally competent health promotion and protection programs. They encourage and enable pertinent components of the health care and social service systems to coalesce and coordinate efforts and effectively advocate on behalf of Latino residents of Massachusetts on public health issues, in close contact and collaboration with other health and human service organizations.
http://www.Lhi.org/

Laubach Literacy
A nonprofit educational corporation dedicated to helping adults learn reading, writing, math and problem solving skills. Laubach's U.S. Program Division has 1,100 member programs throughout the United States. Their International Programs Division has partner programs teaching people in 1,008 communities in 36 countries in Africa, Asia, the Middle East and Latin America. Their international division is particularly sensitive to civic literacy development within the context of general literacy development. The publishing division, New Readers Press, publishes and distributes 500 titles of books and other educational materials to 30,000 literacy programs, libraries, schools, prisons, and religious organizations nationwide. Civic literacy is one aspect of their offerings.
http://www.laubach.org/

LINCS
The Literacy Information and Communication System of the National Institute for Literacy. It links all the major organizations providing various kinds of literacy training and resources. It is an electronic network. A nationally recognized one-stop site for literacy information retrieval and communication among literacy leaders.
http://www.nifl.gov/

Literacy Volunteers of America
One of the major agencies in the US to train volunteers to assist in literacy education. They have useful collections on family literacy and ESOL literacy development as well. This web site has an array of information highlighting their funded programs and "promising practices". Some options are for affiliates only and this includes a cost.
http://www.literacyvolunteers.org

Local Initiatives Support Corporation
Helping neighbors building communities. Good source of ideas, links, and resources.
http://www.liscnet.org/

M

Mediation Works
A company in South Carolina specializing in conflict mediation training for a variety of audiences.
http://www.divorcenet.com/sc/bryantn.html

N

National Adult Literacy Database (NALD)
The National Adult Literacy Database Inc. (NALD) is a federally incorporated, nonprofit service organization that fills the crucial need for a single-source, comprehensive, up-to-date and easily accessible database of adult literacy programs, resources, services and activities across Canada. It also links with other services and databases in North America and overseas. This page provides information on Civic Literacy materials - handbooks, guides, stories, magazines and other things about developing literacy in adults. Publications are listed alphabetically. Look for the statements and standards for best practice publication for detailed help in planning and self-evaluation
http://www.nald.ca

National Adult Literacy and Learning Disabilities Center
Academy for Educational Development
This is a program of the National Institute for Literacy. See their web site to review the resources available through this center. Very useful for adults to discuss the need to improve services for children, youth and adults with learning disabilities.
http://www.nifl.gov/

National Association of Community Action Agencies
Resources related to community action agencies. You can find out about those in S.C. through this site. Community action agencies can be ideal sponsors of family and civic literacy projects. Many of the Community action agencies are the home of Head Start programs and family or neighborhood centers.
http://www.nacaa.org/caausa.htm

National Association of Community Development
Good association for communities working with other communities on regional economic development efforts.
http://www.nado.org/

National Association of Neighborhood Schools
United efforts to restore the neighborhood schools concept. Nice lessons learned from neighborhood schools projects across the U.S.
http://www.nans.org/

The National Association of State Arts Agencies
Useful site for community groups interested in broadening people's horizons through expanded culture and the arts activities. Cultural and the arts projects are effective vehicles for expressing and clarifying civic values and social injustice.
http://www.nasaa-arts.org/

National Center on Rural Justice and Crime Prevention
Useful resources and essays for groups working to strengthen the connections between your community groups and organizations and local justice systems to prevent and reduce crime and violence.
http://virtual.clemson.edu/groups/ncrj/

National Civic League
The National Civic League, the United States' oldest organization advocating for the issues of community democracy. Envisions a country where citizens are actively engaged in the process of self-governance and work in partnership with the public, private and nonprofit sectors of society, and where citizens are creating active civic culture reflective of the diversity of community voices. Great resources. It is the primary site to consult if you are interested in healthy communities' projects. They were chosen to lead the development of the U.S. Healthy Communities Initiative. Check out their Civic Index.
http://www.ncl.org/index.htm

National Coalition for the Homeless
Very good source of directories of services and resources for serving the homeless.
http://www.nationalhomeless.org/

National Community Building Network: Community Building Resource Directory
Very good site for community building resources.
http://www.ncbn.org

National Community Capital Association
Resources to build capital for social, economic and political justice
http://www.communitycapital.org/

National Congress on Community Economic Development
They have resources related to human capital development, FBO community development initiatives, and neighborhood restoration efforts.
http://www.ncced.org/

National Data Analysis System, Child Welfare League of America
Good source of information related to topic of concern to social workers, including child abuse and neglect, welfare reform.
http://ndas.cwla.org/

National Center for Adult Literacy
Housed at the University of Pennsylvania Graduate School of Education, this resource covers a variety of literacy areas including civic literacy.
http://ncal.literacy.upenn.edu/

National Center for ESL Literacy Education
This is the national center for English literacy resources. Books, resource compilations, major publications, list servers and many more resources are available through this site. Civic literacy is one emphasis.
http://www.cal.org/ncle/

The National Center for Family Literacy
Acknowledged as a leader in family literacy program development, research and training, the Center. Rich resource. The Kenan model provided the framework for the federally funded family literacy program, Even Start. From NCFL's home page, look under publications for videos that you can purchase to raise awareness and inform your partners, the community, and potential funders. Good resource for groups that combine family and civic literacy efforts.
http://www.famlit.org

National Center for Learning Disabilities
This center provides national leadership in support of children and adults with learning disabilities by offering information, resources, and referral services. They also develop and support innovative educational programs, including health literacy programs. They promote public awareness and advocate for more effective policies and legislation to help individuals with learning disabilities.
http://www.ncld.org

National Clearinghouse for ESOL Literacy Education (NCLE)
Center for Applied Linguistics
As the name implies NCLE has most of the major resources related to English literacy education organized for easy access. ESOL civic literacy related resources are also a part of the collection.
http://www.cal.org/ncle

National Commission on Civic Renewal
The purpose of the Commission is to assess the condition of civic engagement in the US and to propose specific actions. A major forum to consult if you are the leader of civic literacy efforts. Useful in shaping the direction of initiatives.
http://www.puaf.umd.edu/affiliates/CivicRenewal

National Federation of Community Development Credit Unions

People in low-income areas establish community development credit unions as a way to pool their savings and make loans to each other. Economic self-help and community reinvestment is the heart of the CDCU mission: to help low-income families and communities control their own financial destinies.
http://www.natfed.org/

National Foundation For Teaching Entrepreneurship
While aimed at teaching youth to build businesses, it is recognized as a primary source for resources needed to teach adults business skills. They embed civic literacy development within the context of enhancing skills needed to function well in the workplace. Their resources are aimed at low-income individuals.
http://www.nfte.com/

National Housing Institute's Shelterforce online
This magazine addresses a broad range of topics. A community builder's resource.
http://www.nhi.org/online/

National Institute for Literacy
This is an independent federal organization whose mission states its intent to "ensure the highest quality of literacy services" by promoting communication, collaboration, and innovation, intending to facilitate a comprehensive and unified system for literacy in the United States. Among its offerings is ***LINCS***, the connection to a wealth of literacy research with program descriptions and practical tools grouped into regional hubs. This site includes several different kinds of special collections. The Eastern LINC is the most well developed LINC for Civic Literacy (i.e. the New England Literacy Resource Center, World Education).
http://novel.nifl.gov/

National Issues Forum
A major resource for leaders wishing to engage community members in a variety of discussion on themes of community concern. Has prepared issue reports to use as discussion guides. Has a public policy training institute to prepare leaders. See the "What Do Civic Literacy Initiatives Look Like?" section of this report.
http://www.nifi.org/

National Neighborhood Coalition
A particularly good site for neighborhoods in fast growing areas that need to think about managing growth. Also their issues updates pages are informative. See their Neighborhood Smart Growth Project.
http://www.neighborhoodcoalition.org/board.htm

National Neighborhood Indicators Partnership
A project of the Urban Institute the partnership compiles a number of resources for groups wanting to begin neighborhood indicator projects.
http://www.urban.org/nnip/publications.html

National Network of Grantsmakers
Useful for leaders to see how the funder world is organized, what they talk about, who they are. Check out what they say about South Carolina grantsmakers.
http://www.nng.org/

National People's Action
Good resource for neighborhood association leaders. Great place of inspiration and idea. Good success stories to learn from.
http://www.npa-us.org/

Neighborhood Planning for Community Revitalization

NPCR builds partnerships between community-based organizations, and local colleges and universities around community building activities.
http://www.npcr.org/index.html

Neighborhood Revitalization
Helpful resources and ideas on neighborhood revitalization.
http://www.neolink.com/neighbor.htm

Neighborhoods Online
Great resources. A must see sight. Covers all the topics neighborhood groups tend to get into. Also useful on how to organize and sustain effective neighborhood associations.
http://www.neighborhoodsonline.net/index.html

Neighborhoods USA
A major site for what neighborhoods are doing across America; quarterly newsletter; annual conference; good neighborhood resource section. Many of their projects deal directly with civic literacy development.
http://www.nusa.org/

Neighbor Works.Net
Revitalizing communities and helping low- and moderate-income families rent, purchase and maintain safe, affordable homes. Civic literacy skills are developed while in pursuit of home ownership.
http://www.nw.org/NWIS/HomeMAC.asp

Nonprofit Cyber-Accountability
A must see site for those groups that wonder if particular nonprofit or government services are really accountable. All the questions you would ever ask about financial accountability are answered here.
http://www.bway.net/~hbograd/cyb-acc.html

P

Pax Christi USA/International
Explores issues of peace, racism, and justice. Good site for those groups interested in peace education, human rights, and spiritual dialogue on social justice.
http://www.paxchristi.net/

Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life
Conducts the Annual Survey on Religion and Public Life. Interesting reading of latest policies on FBO involvement in community development and on charitable giving policies.
www.pewforum.org

Pew Partnership for Civic Change
A rich array of resources related to civic literacy. See their *Just Call It Effective* report on 14 communities involved in civic change. See their *Thriving Neighborhoods* Page. They are a research organization that documents and disseminates community information.
http://www.pew-partnership.org/

Poverty Related Resources
Lists major resources to assist in alleviating poverty conditions around the world and here at home. A must see site if adults start talking about the poverty conditions they are in and how it is affecting their lives.
http://www.ssc.wisc.edu/irp/povlinks.htm

R

Right To Know
Community group involvement in environmental, housing and sustainable development projects.
http://www.rtk.net/

Rural Community Empowerment Program
This is part of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. See their Toolbox section in particular for practical helps. Check out the funding opportunities.
http://www.ezec.gov/

Rural Development USA
U.S. Department of Agriculture's involvement in rural community development explained. Success stories are interesting; good listing of resources and links related to a variety of rural community improvements.
http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/

Rural LISC
Building partnerships for build rural communities. Good resources, ideas, and links.
http://www.ruralisc.org/index.html

S

SafeKids Now Net
Resources for community groups working on toxic environmental issues. Aimed at creating healthy environments for children at home and around the world. Stories of neighborhood association efforts are great. Good ideas on doable projects.
http://environet.policy.net/about/

Sage Publication
A primary resource for books on program evaluation.
http://sagepub.com/

Search Institute
Many resources are available from this Institute to help survey attitudes about how healthy children, youth and adults think their community. Included in the survey are various aspects of civic engagement. Those interested in taking an asset-based approach to discussions with citizens are encouraged to consult this organization's resources.
http://www.search-institute.org/

Smart Growth Network
Great resources. Good success stories. Basic concepts of smart growth communities explained. Good site for adults who focus civic engagement on cleaning up the environment around their neighborhood, their children's schools, etc.
http://www.smartgrowth.org/

South Carolina Center on Grassroots and Nonprofit Leadership
Related to this report the center developed the entire adult literacy effective practice report series, of which this civic literacy report is one. It has determined that one challenge that all voluntary associations and nonprofit leaders have in common is how to effectively engage and work with low literate adults. This Center therefore is committed to helping SC build its adult literacy education system so that nonprofit and voluntary association leaders are better supported and the literacy levels increase in all adults in SC. Few professional enrichment opportunities are available to nonprofits and voluntary associations in SC on adult literacy education. Many resources are available related to literacy education on their web site.
http://www.sclc.clemson.edu

South Carolina Council on Conflict Resolution
The primary membership organization in SC to consult to receive training and technical assistance related to conflict resolution.
http://www.scmediate.org/

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South Carolina Literacy Resource Center
This is SC's center for LINCS (referenced above). The center is operated by the State Department of Education and offers resources and consultation on adult literacy. There are many valuable resources on this site: SC's State Plan for adult literacy and family literacy that provides examples of performance measurement instruments for adults and children; connections with state professional associations; access to "coach" - on site technical assistance and a training calendar
http://sclrc.org/index.htm

Shore Bank
Also referred to as the South Shore Bank in the literature. The country's oldest and largest community development bank. Patterned after the famous Bangladesh Grameen Bank, it provides a rich resource for low resourced communities and community groups. Be sure to consult their publication on a strategy for revitalization of neighborhoods. Also see Humanistic Banking reference. Excellent resource for adults who talk about not being able to access the credit they need and who want to start small businesses but cannot get the banks in their area to consider lending them money.
http://www.sbk.com/

State and Local Government on the Net
As the name implies this is a good site for finding resources from state and local governments.
http://www.statelocalgov.net/index.cfm

Strengthening the Urban/Rural Connection
A multi-year project that aligns rural and urban community builders for an exchange of opinions and expertise, and promotes transfer of learning based on experiences in community development. Good place to chat with those involved in similar projects as yours.
http://www.ruralurban.org/

Study Circles Resource Center
Great resources for neighborhood groups that want to engage in effective discussions on neighborhood improvement. Good online resources, how to booklets. Success stories to learn from.
http://www.studycircles.org/index.html

Sustainable Building Sourcebook
Information on sustainable building techniques and use of sustainable building materials. Good for adult groups talking about affordable housing issues.
http://www.greenbuilder.com/sourcebook/

Sustainable Communities Information Services
Lots of resources including books, slides, CDs, useful concept papers, stories of community efforts. Loaded with tools and resources for community leaders thinking about creating sustainable communities where the environment, health and economic development are balanced in development.
http://www.ecoiq.com/sustainability/

T

Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages
TESOL's mission is "to develop the expertise of its members and others involved in teaching English to speakers of other languages to help them foster effective communication in diverse settings while respecting individuals' language rights. To this end TESOL articulates and advances standards for professional preparation and employment, continuing education, and student programs. TESOL links groups worldwide to enhance communication among language specialists. TESOL produces high-quality programs, services and products. TESOL promotes advocacy to further the profession."
http://www.tesol.edu/

Tenant Online Resources
Online resource for residential tenant groups and associations. While it deals with N.Y. City issues you will find several resources worth looking at if adults you work with are in public housing and low-income situations.
http://tenant.net/

20/20 Vision
This is an advocacy organization but it has a Democracy site with a mission to strengthen citizen involvement. Good site for groups interested in peace, environmental sustainability, and democracy discussions.
http://www.2020vision.org/democracy/democracy.htm

U

The Urban Institute: A Nonpartisan Economic and Social Research Organization
One of the leading research institutes that looks at various aspects of nonprofit leadership. Has many useful resources on civic engagement and social justice issues.
http://www.urban.org/

U.S. Coalition for Healthier Cities and Communities
The U.S. Coalition for Healthier Cities and Communities grew out of the work of the National Civic League. It is a partnership of more than 100 organizations working together to focus attention and resources to improve the health and quality of life in communities. It is a major source of success stories to inspire local efforts as well as very practical community guides for leaders.
http://www.healthiercities.org

US Department of Education
Office of Vocational and Adult Education
The Office of Vocational and Adult Education has the mission to help all people achieve the knowledge and skills to be lifelong learners, to be successful in their chosen careers, and to be effective citizens. The web page offers several sites that provide information on adult education and all aspects of literacy.
http://www.ed.gov/offices/OVAE/aboutus.html

V

Virtual Library
Look at their Community Networks section and their civic literacy section
http://vlib.org/

Votenet
National political news and links to various statewide officials.
http://www.votenet.com/

W

WebActive
A democracy discussion newsletter. Useful as discussion starters or as resources for study circles.
http://www.webactive.com/pacifica/demnow.html

Welfare Information Network
A clearinghouse of information, policy analysis and technical assistance on welfare reform. Useful for working with adults connected with welfare programs.
http://www.welfareinfo.org/

The Well
A global discussion forum on community participation and community development themes. Useful for adult groups stuck in their situation and needing ideas from others.
http://www.well.com/index.html

W.K. Kellogg Collection of Rural Community Development Resources
Developed with a grant from Kellogg Foundation, the University of Nebraska has a good collection of resources organized online for Community Development, Strategic Planning, Telecommunication, Educational Leadership Development, Economic Development Land Use, Natural Resources, and Health Care. Good for leaders to use in planning how to steer community task group directions.
http://www.unl.edu/kellogg/main.html

World Education
New England Literacy Resource Center
NELRC is one of the few agencies in the US devoted to making civic literacy and community action a part of adult literacy and ESOL education. They have a source book available online, Civic Participation and Community Action Sourcebook, for adult educators to use to guide civic literacy initiatives. They also have a web site called the civic participation collection which is a rich resource of ideas and resource materials. This web site contains numerous helps on community action, EL/civics instruction, citizenship preparation, publications and other collections available,

policy and legislation, facts and statistics and online discussions. They publish an online newsletter called The Change Agent which is a theme-based newspaper focusing on social justice related issues and ways these issues can become a part of the civic literacy learning environment. They do workshops nationally and internationally to equip community leaders with the basic on how to get started on civic literacy initiatives.
http://www.nelrc.org/civicp.htm

World Vision
This is a widely recognized international relief and community development organization. Its U.S. branch has useful resources for local faith-based organizations that want to do relief and community development projects. See their church resources links. *Churches At Work* is a tool kit produced by a consortium of organizations and managed by staff from World Vision and the Community Information Exchange.
http://www.worldvision.org/worldvision/atwork.nsf/stable/index.htm

White House Urban Policies
Recently released presidential documents on urban issues
http://www.whitehourse.gov/government/

Appendix

National Adult Literacy Survey
Description of Literacy Levels

When literacy was simply thought of as reading, it was typically measured in grade-level equivalents. An adult's literacy skill was said to be at first grade or fifth grade, for example. A more complex, more realistic conception of literacy emphasizes its use in adult activities. To determine literacy skills in American adults ages 16 and older, the 1992 National Adult Literacy Survey (NALS) used test items that resembled everyday life tasks. It involved the use of prose, document and quantitative skills. The NALS classified the results in five levels of proficiency with level one being the lowest level of proficiency and level five the highest. These levels are now commonly used to describe adults' literacy skill levels.

The ***prose literacy*** items assessed the adults' ability to handle written text such as editorials, news stories, poems and fiction. It assessed the ability to handle both expository and narrative prose. Expository prose involves printed information that defines, describes, or informs such as newspaper stories or written instructions. Narrative prose assessed the adults' ability to understand a story. Prose literacy tasks included locating all the information requested, integrating information from various parts of a passage of text, and writing new information related to the text.

Document literacy items assessed the adults' ability to understand short forms or graphically displayed information found in everyday life, including job applications, payroll forms, transportation schedules, maps, tables and graphs. Document literacy tasks included locating a particular intersection on a street map, using a schedule to choose the appropriate bus, or entering information on an application form.

Quantitative literacy information was displayed visually in graphs or charts or in numerical form using whole numbers, fractions, decimals, percentages, or time units. These quantities appeared in both prose and document form. Quantitative literacy referred to locating quantities, integrating information from various parts of a document, determining the necessary arithmetic operation, and performing that operation. Quantitative literacy tasks included balancing a checkbook, completing an order form and determining the amount of interest paid on a loan.

The National Adult Literacy Survey captures well the printed and written information dimensions and related reasoning skills but isn't as complete as the National Institute for Literacy's *Equipping For the Future* competency standards for adult literacy. These standards also include the communication, interpersonal relationship and lifelong learning dimensions to literacy development. The *Equipping For the Future* standards are reviewed elsewhere in this report.

Almost all adults in Level 1 can read a little but not well enough to fill out an application, read a food label, a medicine label, read a simple story to a child, or

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fill out a deposit slip correctly. Adults in level 2 usually can perform more complex tasks such as comparing, contrasting or integrating pieces of information but usually not higher level reading and problem-solving skills. For example, those at level 2 could correctly write their signature on a social security card and fill out a simple job application. But they could not read correctly a sales graph or figure out what the gross pay was on a pay check stub, or add correctly the cost of a meal. Adults in levels 3 through 5 usually can perform the same types of more complex tasks on increasingly lengthy and dense texts and documents. These levels use a broad range of information processing skills in various combinations. For example, people at level 3 could figure out bar charts and graphs but could not correctly read a bus schedule. They could not figure out the correct number of minutes that it would take to get from one location to another. People at level 4 could read the bus schedule but not summarize the views of parents and teachers found on a summary chart which involved comparing parent and teacher data across four questions and across three levels of schools. They could not correctly estimate the cost per ounce of a food product when given a food store shelf label with this information on it or figure out interest charges on a home loan.

In summary each scale was divided into five levels that reflect the progression of information-processing skills and strategies. These levels were determined not as a result of any statistical property of the scales, but rather as a result of *shifts in the skills and strategies required to succeed on various tasks along the scales, from simple to complex.*

For a review of the levels of literacy found in the National Adult Literacy survey see http://nces.ed.gov/naal/ . This site also contains samples from the survey instruments.

Many factors explain the relative high number of adults in the lowest level of literacy. Twenty-two percent of adults in Level 1 were immigrants who may have just been learning to speak English. More than 60% didn't complete high school. More than 30% were over 65. More than 25% had physical or mental conditions that kept them from fully participating in work, school, housework, or other activities and almost 20% had vision problems that affected their ability to read print.[46]

National Adult Literacy Survey[47]
Five Literacy Proficiency Levels

	Prose	Document	Quantitative
Level One	Most of the tasks in this level require the reader to read relatively short text to locate a single piece of information which is identical to or synonymous with the information given in the question or directive.	Tasks in this level tend to require the reader either to locate a piece of information based on a literal match or to enter information from personal knowledge onto a document.	Tasks in this level require readers to perform single, relatively simple arithmetic operations, such as addition.
Level Two	Some tasks in this level require readers to locate a single piece of information in the text; however, several distractors or plausible but incorrect pieces of information may be present, or low-level inferences may be required. Other tasks require the reader to integrate two or more pieces of information or to compare and contrast easily identifiable information based on a criterion provided in the question or directive.	Tasks in this level are more varied than those in Level 1. Some require the readers to match a single piece of information; however, several distractors may be present or the match may require low-level inferences.	Tasks in this level typically require readers to perform a single operation using numbers that are either stated in the task or easily located in the material.
Level Three	Tasks in this level tend to require readers to make literal or synonymous matches between the text and information given in the task, or to make matches that require low-level inferences. Other tasks ask readers to integrate information from dense or lengthy text that contains no organizational aids such as headings. Readers may also be asked to generate a response based on information that can be easily identified in the text. Distracting information is present, but is not located near the correct information.	Some tasks in this level require the reader to integrate multiple pieces of information from one or more documents. Others ask readers to cycle through rather complex tables or graphs which contain information that is irrelevant or inappropriate to the task.	In tasks in this level, two or more numbers are typically needed to solve the problem, and these must be found in the material. The operations needed can be determined from the arithmetic relation terms used in the question or directive.
Level Four	These tasks require readers to perform multiple-feature matches and to integrate or synthesize information from complex or lengthy passages. More complex inferences are needed to perform successfully.	Tasks in this level, like those at the previous levels, ask readers to perform multiple-feature matches, cycle through documents, and integrate information; however, the require a greater degree of inferencing.	These tasks tend to require readers to perform two or more sequential operations or a single operation in which the quantities are found in different types of displays, or the operations must be inferred from semantic information given or drawn from prior knowledge.
Level Five	Some tasks in this level require the reader to search for information in dense text which contains a number of plausible distractors. Others ask readers to make high-level inferences or use specialized background knowledge. Some tasks ask readers to contrast complex information.	Tasks in this level require the reader to search through complex displays that contain multiple distractors, to make high-level text-based inferences, and to use specialized knowledge.	These tasks require readers to perform multiple operations sequentially. They must disembed the features of the problem from the text or rely on background knowledge to determine the quantities or operations needed.

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Notes and References

[1] This is the definition found in the National Literacy Act of 1991. See http://www.nifl.gov/public-law/ section three.

[2] *Equipped for the Future*, Washington DC: National Institute for Literacy, http://www.nifl.gov/lincs/collections/eff/eff.html.

[3] See http://www.nifl.gov/ for the entire EFF report from which this is taken.

[4] To determine what the rates are for your county go to the CASAS site. http://www.casas.org

[5] See http://www.nces.ed.gov/nall/ for a review of the National Adult Literacy Survey. Samples of test questions and detailed coverage of what the survey is about can be found at this site.

[6] See the National Institute for Literacy for a copy of the complete Literacy Summit report. The challenges are reviewed in Table 5. http://www.nifl.gov/

[7] Based on the assessments of the National Commission for Civic Renewal. See their web site for details.

[8] For example John McKnight and Jody Kretzmann's work on asset mapping has shown that associations are alive and well and even in the poorest of neighborhoods, people belong to many formal and informal associations. They are just different from the typical "membership" organization of the past. See the Asset-based Community Development Center's web site.

[9] See a full discussion of this point in Hahn, Carole L. (1999) "Challenges To Civic Education In the United States" in Torney-Purta, Judith, John Schwille and Jo-Ann Amadeo. (1999) *Civic Education across Countries: Twenty-four National Cast Studies from the IEA Civic Education Project*. Amsterdam, The Netherlands: The International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement, pp. 583-607.

[10] The S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control's Healthy Community program was nationally recognized throughout the 1990's. With government cutbacks the entire program has been terminated.

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[11] See a full discussion of this point in Hahn, Carole L. (1999) "Challenges To Civic Education in the United States" in Torney-Purta, Judith, John Schwille and Jo-Ann Amadeo. (1999) *Civic Education across Countries: Twenty-four National Cast Studies from the IEA Civic Education Project*. Amsterdam, The Netherlands: The International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement, pp. 583-607.

[12] See Putnam, Robert (1999). *Bowling Alone in America*. New York, New York: Simon and Schuster.

[13] See a full discussion of this point in Hahn, Carole L. (1999) "Challenges To Civic Education in the United States" in Torney-Purta, Judith, John Schwille and Jo-Ann Amadeo. (1999) *Civic Education across Countries: Twenty-four National Cast Studies from the IEA Civic Education Project*. Amsterdam, The Netherlands: The International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement, pp. 593-594.

[14] See a full discussion of this point in Hahn, Carole L. (1999) "Challenges To Civic Education in the United States" in Torney-Purta, Judith, John Schwille and Jo-Ann Amadeo. (1999) *Civic Education across Countries: Twenty-four National Cast Studies from the IEA Civic Education Project*. Amsterdam, The Netherlands: The International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement, p. 605.

[15] As reported in Jalandoni, Nadine and Keith Hume. (2001) *America's Family Volunteers*. Washington, D.C.: Independent Sector.

[16] Egan, Gerard and Michael A. Cowan. (1979) *People in Systems: A Model of Development in the Human Service Professions and Education*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, Inc. p. 6. The leaders engaged in the 24-nation survey on civic education are using a similar model. See endnote 13 for citation.

[17] Hahn, Carole L. (1999) "Challenges To Civic Education In the United States" in Torney-Purta, Judith, John Schwille and Jo-Ann Amadeo. (1999) *Civic Education across Countries: Twenty-four National Cast Studies from the IEA Civic Education Project*. Amsterdam, The Netherlands: The International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement, pp. 593-594.

[18] See the CINET web site for a complete report on these standards http://civnet.org/resources/teach/national/toc.htm

[19] National Commission on Civic Renewal. (1998) *A National of Spectators: How Civic Disengagement Weakens America and what We Can Do About It.* College Park, MD: University of Maryland.

[20] See CINET http://www.civiced.org/

[21] Hodgkinson, V. and Weitzman, M. (1997) *Volunteering and Giving Among Teenagers 12 to 17 Years of Age.* Washington, DC: Independent Sector.

[22] Consult the nearest urban and regional planning department at the state's land grant university as that tends to be where such professional programs are housed (in SC it is Clemson University). They can provide help on how to conduct community build out exercises. Consult the American Planning Association press for publications on this, including those involving children and youth in such experiences. See http://www.planning.org/ Click on Your Community for the Kids, and Neighborhoods and Neighborhood Collaborative Planning resources, including a summary of effective practice community initiatives.

[23] See Mullabey, Ramona, Yve Susskind, and Barry Checkoway. (1999). *Youth Participation in Community Planning.* Chicago: American Planning Association, Planner's Book Service. This recent publication demonstrates how various communities have encouraged young people to solve problems, voice their opinions, and make a difference in communities across the US. It is a good how-to manual as well as great case study report. It can be ordered online at http://www.planning.org

[24] See the SC Arts Commission at http://www.state.sc.us/arts

[25] See http://www.ncl.org Do a search on "healthy communities" and a number of All-American City stories will come up for you to learn from.

[26] See http://www.healthycommunities.org

[27] See the SC Center on Grassroots and Nonprofit Leadership at http://www.sclc.clemson.edu

[28] See the Search Institute at http://www.search-institute.org

[29] See ABCD at http://www.northwestern.edu/IPR/abcd.html Some of their asset inventories are available online. Their new book on the *Organization of Hope: A Workbook for Rural Asset-based Development* is very useful. See their "networks" section for discussion on the ABCD Neighborhood Circle's project. See their "mapping resources" section for various inventories.

[30] See the National Issues Forum at http://www.nifi.org/

[31] See the Kettering Foundation site at http://www.kettering.org for details.

[32] Barbara Brown, Cooperative Extension Agent in Sumter County, is the leader of the Issue Forums. She can be reached at 803-773-5561.

[33] Contact Dr. Kathleen Wilson, Director, Center on Neighborhood Development, Institute on Family and Neighborhood Life, Clemson University, 158 Poole Agricultural Center, Clemson, SC 29634, 864-656-6732 if your community is interested in holding such a forum.

[34] See the United Nations sites for what some of these projects look like in other nations. http://www.unifem.undp.org/

[35] This table was developed based in part on information from the following sources: 1) Sharon Darling (2000) *Testimony before the committee on appropriations, subcommittee on labor, health and human services, education and related agencies*, US House of Representatives, http://www.famlit.org/policy/sdtestimony.html 2) Rasiniski, T., & Padak, N. (1993). *Initiating even start programs* (Occasional Paper #1). Ohio: Kent State University; 3) *Research: Literacy facts and figures*; 4) Rasmussen, J. *The BC framework of statements and standards of best practices in family literacy* (1999). http://www.nald.ca/FULLTEXT/framework/cover.htm. 5) Sapin, C., Padak, N.D. (1998). *The family literacy resource notebook*, Ohio: The Ohio Literacy Resource Center, pp. 4.1 - 4.6.

[36] See the National Civic Leagues site for good definitions of community and see *Helping Families Survive and Thrive*, Institute for Families in Society, University of South Carolina for help on defining family. http://www.ncl.org

[37] More than 600 communities throughout the U.S. have such statements that are guiding significant community action. For examples of shared visions and common values that communities have created see the community reports featured in the resource section of this report. For an extended listing of communities consult the SC Center on Grassroots and Nonprofit Leaderships web sit at http://www.sclc.clemson.edu

[38] See Jacksonville's and Pasadena's quality of life indexes for two examples that many communities have followed to begin to define their own sense of quality of life. City of Pasadena, Public Health Department, 100 North Garfield Avenue, Room 136, Pasadena, CA 91109. Jacksonville's reports are online at http://www.jcci.org/indic.htm

[39] See the rich array of resources on this principle from the Asset-Based Community Development Center at Northwestern University http://www.nwu.edu/IPR/abcd.html

[40] See Linney, J. A. and Wandersman, A (1991) *Prevention plus III: Assessing alcohol and other drug prevention programs at the school and community level*, Rockville, MD: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Substance Abuse Prevention. This is a free publication that will help your group work through a complete evaluation process. Also see Jacobs, F. H. (1987) The five-tiered approach to evaluation: Context and implementation. In H. B. Weiss and F. H. Jacobs (Eds), *Evaluating family programs*. Hawthrone, NY: Aldine de Gruyter Publishers. Also see *Evaluation from the start: An evaluation guidebook for fatherhood programs* available through the Sisters of Charity Foundation of South Carolina, 2601 Laurel Street, Columbia, S.C. 29204. This is a free publication and a self-help guidebook on setting up an evaluation for your community projects. If your group is struggling on what kinds of outcomes you want for families with young children, consult the Search Institute at http://www.search-institute.org They have identified 40 outcomes for parents and other significant adults and for infants, toddlers, children and adolescents. These outcomes, stated as assets for healthy child development, are not a bad place for groups to begin focusing their efforts.

[41] This section is based on three works: 1) Ayre, D., Clough, G., & Norris, T. (2000). *Facilitating community change*. Boulder, CO: Community Initiatives; 2) Mattessich, P., Monsey, B. & Roy, C. (1997). *Community building: What makes it work: A review of factors influencing successful community building*. Saint Paul, Minnesota: Amherst H. Wilder Foundation; and 3) Dombro, A. L., O'Donell, N. S., Galinsky, E., Melcher, S. G., and Farber, A. (1996). *Community mobilization: Strategies to support young children and their families*. NY: Work and Family Institute http://www.familiesandwork.org

[42] This section is based on information from the following sources: 1) Auerbach, E.R. (1995). *Which way for family literacy: Intervention or empowerment?* In L. M. Morrow (Ed.), Family literacy: Connections in schools and communities (pp.11-28). Delaware: International Reading Association; 2) Auerbach (1995a). *Deconstructing the discourse of strengths in family literacy*. Journal of Reading Behavior, 27 (4), 643-661; 3) Auerbach, (1989). *Toward a social-contextual approach to family literacy*. Harvard Educational Review, 59, 165-187 4) Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy. *Lessons learned (2001a)*. http://www.barbarabushfoundation.com/ll.html; 5) DeBruin-Parecki, Paris, and Siedenburg, pp. 2, 7-8; 6) DeBruin-Parecki, A., Paris, S.G., & Seidenberg, J.L. (1996). *Characteristics of Effective Family Literacy*

Programs in Michigan, Technical Report TR96-07, Michigan: National Center on Adult Literacy 6) Gadsen, V.I. (1994). *Understanding family literacy:Conceptual issues facing the field.* Teachers' College Record, 96, 58-86; 7) Gadsen, (1992). *Giving meaning to literacy: Intergenerational beliefs about access.* Theory into Practice, 31, 328-336 8) Morrow, L.M. (1995). *Family literacy: Connections in schools and communities.* Delaware: International Reading Association; 9) Rasmussen; 10) Weinstein-Shr, G. (1995). *Learning from uprooted families.* In G. Weinstein & E. Quintero (Eds.), Immigrant learners and their families: Literacy to connect the generations (pp.113-133). McHenry, Illinois: Delta Systems Co., Inc. 11) Weinstein-Shr, (1993). *Restoring the intergenerational cycle of family teaching: Family literacy in multilingual communities.* Washington D.C.: Southport Institute for Policy Analysis. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 373 604).

[43] Padak, N. & Rasinski, T. (1998). *Family literacy programs: Getting started*, The Family literacy resource notebook, Ohio: Kent State, p. 4.5

[44] DeBruin-Parecki, Paris & Siedenburg, J., (1996). pp. 12 - 13.

[45] See the resources available on line through the Children, Families and Youth national initiative for help on the design of your evaluation program. See http://www.reeusda.gov/4h/cyfar/cyfar.htm Their evaluation guide follows Francine Jacob's Five-Tier Approach to Evaluation. The Five Tier model is also explained In Heather B. Weiss and F. H. Jacobs (Eds.), *Evaluating family programs.* Hawthrone, NY: Aldine de Gruyter Publishers

[46] Information courtesy of the National Institute for Literacy. http://www.nifl.gov

[47] U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (1992) National Adult Literacy Survey. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education. See http://www.nces.ed.gov/

[48] *From margins to the mainstreams: An action agenda for literacy.* p. 4. National Institute for Literacy http://www.nifl.gov

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